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Engendering Effectiveness:  
A Feminist Critique of the New Aid Architecture

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy

2015

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Ph.D.  
Confederal Schools of  
Religions, Peace Studies  
and Theology



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## Summary

### Engendering Effectiveness: A Feminist Critique of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

This study is concerned with the absence of gender-sensitive indicators oriented towards human rights and human development goals in the Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness – the main international agreement to make official development aid more effective. The thesis takes issue with the technocratic approach of the new aid agenda and argues for gender-sensitive indicators of aid effectiveness. Using Feminist Political Economy as theoretical framework, the study draws on secondary data (policy documents, newspapers, independent studies, a range of reports, and the academic literature), and uses a case study based on Nicaragua supplemented by primary data (semi-structured interviews) to assess, critique and develop a framework for gender-sensitive indicators to measure aid effectiveness.

The thesis interrogates the economic assumptions underpinning current conceptualisations and measures of effective aid. It reveals that gender biases shaping the current economic paradigm also shape aid policy and corresponding measures of effectiveness. Noting the gendered limitations imposed by the underpinning neoliberal economic paradigm into which aid is situated, the study seeks to identify existing good practices of gender-sensitive measures of aid effectiveness. Using a solution-oriented lens, the exploration assesses three proposals of gender-sensitive indicators that emerged to account for gender equality in aid effectiveness from international institutions. The analysis considers the strengths, limitations and opportunities offered by each framework and notes their distinct approaches provide good elements of gender sensitivity but insufficient to provide a transformative approach to the official aid agenda. The thesis further explores popular gender-related indicators of development and draws on the capabilities approach of the human development paradigm and on feminist epistemologies to argue for local, context specific, gender-sensitive indicators.

To explore the viability of this argument, the thesis uses a case study focused on Nicaragua to identify how the new approach to measuring aid effectiveness is implemented with particular attention to the practices of local actors and their aid projects. The case study examines various scenarios, or lenses, for the analysis: 1) the indicators of the Paris Declaration, 2) the Gender Inequality Index (GII), 3) a project on women's labour rights funded by the UK government, 4) a project on violence against (indigenous) women funded by the Canadian government, 5) a joint programme promoting women's participation in gender budgets funded by the MDG Achievement Fund. The case findings revealed that: 1) the current indicators of the Paris Declaration are not sensitive to the local context and further entrench gendered neoliberalism into development policy to the detriment of



gender equality, human rights goals, and feminist organisations, 2) global indicators such as the GII are unfit for measuring aid effectiveness due to their universalising thrust, amongst other factors, 3) local gender politics unduly influenced by conservative religious actors can seriously shape and impede women's participation (and their demands for human rights) in the official development process, 4) participatory process can be fraught with contradictions and can serve as mechanisms of exclusion rather than inclusion, 5) the funding framework into which organisations are expected to operate can undermine and severely limit long term transformative work and strategies for gender equality, 6) results-based management frameworks to measure gender equality interventions do not allow for capturing the complexity of effective change in gender issues, 7) women's organisations do use the existing language and tools of aid effectiveness to reinterpret and enrich the meaning of effectiveness for gender equality goals, and 8) context specific indicators are needed for measuring aid effectiveness.

The findings of the case study, in combination with the general investigation, led to the following overall recommendations for those developing gender-sensitive indicators of aid effectiveness. The list does not follow a particular order:

- Importance of conducting intersectional analyses to identify distinct experiences of discrimination and inequality lived by many women and men in order to target aid / development efforts adequately
- Importance of involving the beneficiaries and mediators of aid money in the creation of indicators with consideration to potential power histories between them and due attention to problem solving strategies
- Asking if and how the process of indicator development allows/ hinders local ways of knowing to shape development planning
- Importance of distinguishing between working 'in partnership' (when the power relations between parties are symmetrical) versus working 'collaboratively' (when the power asymmetries shape relationships)
- Asking: what are the experiences/ histories of the country/ locality in question with participative processes? What lessons can be drawn and what culturally sensitive approaches can be developed to capitalise in the existing networks and structures to ensure a fruitful process of indicator development?
- Importance of using the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform of Action as tools to embed women's human rights into aid measures in order to keep holding governments to account in their legal commitments to respecting human rights and ending gender based discriminations.
- Asking: to what extent those involved in the management and facilitation of aid money, men and women, represent a variety of voices in their community?



## **Dedication**

*To my loving mother, Gloria Elba Piñán Bonet, for giving me wings and letting me fly as far  
as I could.*

*Thanks for being such an amazing example of determination and courage.*

## Contents

<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Contents .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>List of Acronyms.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Introduction.. .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Motivation and purpose.....	13
Background.....	13
Justification: the importance of this thesis topic.....	19
Gender-sensitive Indicators of Aid Effectiveness: the existing literature.....	19
Theoretical framework.....	23
Methods .....	25
Ethics .....	29
Limitations of the case study.....	31
<b>Chapter 1. Feminist Perspectives on Neoliberalism and Aid Effectiveness .....</b>	<b>34</b>
1.1. Introduction.....	34
1.2. Neoliberalism .....	35
1.2.1. Neoliberalism: Core Ideas and Assumptions Explored.....	35
1.2.2. Classical Antecedents .....	37
1.2.3. Neoliberalism and the Rise of Development Economics .....	39
1.3. Neoliberalism and Aid Policy.....	42
1.3.1. Global Level (The Monterrey Consensus).....	45
1.3.2. Aid for Trade .....	46
1.3.3. Government Programme Level: Micro-credit .....	47
1.4. Feminist Economics View of Mainstream Liberal Economics.....	48
1.5. Feminists' views on Development .....	53
1.5.1. Gender and development.....	53
1.5.2. The Monterrey Consensus.....	55
1.5.3. Trade Liberalisation .....	57
1.5.4. Financial liberalisation .....	59
1.6. Feminist Critique of Neoliberal Aid Policy Approach and Aid Effectiveness .....	61
1.7. Conclusion .....	64
<b>Chapter 2. Background to the Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness and Feminist Analysis.....</b>	<b>66</b>

2.1. Introduction .....	66
2.2. Context.....	68
2.3. What is the Paris Declaration?.....	71
2.4. Alternative ideas of effectiveness.....	78
2.5. What has been achieved? .....	81
2.6. Analysis: Gender Blindness and the Paris Declaration .....	84
2.7. Conclusion.....	96
<b>Chapter 3. Engendering Aid Effectiveness Indicators: Assessing the proposals to date</b> .....	<b>99</b>
3.1. Proposals of Gender-sensitive Indicators for Tracking the Paris Declaration ..	100
3.1.1. African Gender and Development Evaluators Network (AGDEN) .....	100
3.1.2. EC/UN Partnership for Development and Peace .....	105
3.1.3. GENDERNET (the OECD/DAC Network on Gender Equality).....	108
3.2. Merits, limitations, and scope of current gender-sensitive proposals to engender the Paris Declaration.....	114
3.3. Alternative Frameworks to Engender Aid/ Development Effectiveness .....	119
3.3.1. Human Development Paradigm Approach .....	119
3.3.2. The Human Development Index and Gender Indices .....	120
3.3.3. What Gender-sensitive Indicators for Aid Effectiveness?.....	127
<b>Chapter 4. Research Findings.....</b>	<b>130</b>
4.1. Introduction .....	130
4.2. Research Method and Overview.....	131
4.3. Description and logic of the case study .....	134
4.4. Limitations of the case study .....	137
4.5. Nicaragua's Gender and Aid Politics .....	137
4.5.1. Background.....	137
4.5.2. Two development tracks in Nicaragua: The ALBA and the OECD's aid/ development effectiveness agenda .....	140
4.6. Nicaragua in the Paris Declaration.....	143
4.7. Nicaragua according to the Gender Inequality Index .....	149
4.8. Project 1: Indigenous and Women's Rights .....	150
4.8.1. Introduction.....	151
4.8.2. Results of the Project .....	153
4.8.3. Assessing and Measuring Effectiveness .....	154
4.9. Project 2: Civil and Economic Rights of Women .....	160
4.9.1. Introduction.....	160



4.9.2. Results of the Project.....	162
4.9.3. Assessing and Measuring Effectiveness .....	162
4.10. Joint programme on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment .....	165
4.10.1. Introduction .....	165
4.10.2. Joint programme Structure and Implementation .....	166
4.10.3. Gender and Effectiveness.....	172
4.10.4. Joint programme’s results .....	173
4.10.5. Assessing and measuring results .....	182
<b>Chapter 5. Analysis of Findings .....</b>	<b>183</b>
5.1. Introduction.....	183
5.2. Limits of the Paris Declaration indicators .....	184
5.2.1. First Limitation.....	184
5.2.2. Second Limitation .....	193
5.2.3. Third Limitation .....	195
5.3. From the global (governance) to the local (gender-sensitive development): an ongoing tension.....	198
5.4. Possibilities through women’s agency .....	201
5.4.1. Engendering effectiveness: lessons from the case studies .....	202
<b>Conclusion ....</b>	<b>209</b>
<b>Bibliography..</b>	<b>219</b>
<b>Appendices ...</b>	<b>248</b>
Appendix 1: Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.....	249
Appendix 2: Template of Interview Guide for Projects One and Two .....	261
Appendix 3: Template of Interview Guide for OECD/ GENDERNET Staff .....	265
Appendix 4: Template of Consent Form Used for Interviews.....	266

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## List of Acronyms

- AAA – Accra Agenda for Action
- AGDEN – African Gender and Development Evaluators Network
- ALBA – Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas
- AMICA – Indigenous and Women’s Rights on Nicaragua’s Atlantic Coast
- BACG – Better Aid Coordination Group
- BOD – Busan Outcome Document
- BPfA – Beijing Platform for Action
- CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- CPIA – Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
- CPR – Country Performance Rating
- CSO – Civil Society Organisation
- DAC – Development Assistance Committee
- DFATD – Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development
- FDI – Foreign Direct Investment
- FfD – Financing for Development
- FTAA – Free Trade Agreement of the Americas
- FSLN – Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (Sandinista National Liberation Front)
- GAD – Gender and Development
- GDP – Gross Domestic Product
- GENDERNET – Gender Network of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and  
Development
- GNI – Gross National Income
- HIPC – Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
- HR – Human Rights
- IDA – Interamerican Development Bank
- IFI – International Financial Institution
- JP – Joint programme
- ILO – International Labour Organisation
- IMF – International Monetary Fund
- JAS – Joint Assistance Strategies

LM – Logical Model

MAGFOR – Ministry of Agropecuarian and Forestry Affairs

MDG – Millennium Development Goals

MDG-F – Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund

MEC – Movimiento de Mujeres María Elena Cuadra (María Elena Cuadra Women’s Movement)

NGDO – Non Governmental Development Organisation

NGO – Non Governmental Organisation

ODA – Overseas Development Assistance

OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OECD-DAC – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee

PD – Paris Declaration

PEFA – Public Expenditure and Financial Assessment

PFM – Public Financial Management

PIU – Project implementation unit

PRS – Poverty Reduction Strategy

PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

RBM – Results-based Management Framework

SAP – Structural Adjustment Programmes

SWAP – Sector Wide Approach

TNC – Trans National Corporations

UNSNA – United Nations System of National Accounts

VAW – Violence Against Women

WP-EFF – Working Party on Aid Effectiveness

WTO – World Trade Organisation

## Introduction

### Motivation and purpose

In 2007 I had the opportunity to work in the early stages of the EC/UN Partnership for Development and Peace. The project was devised in response to the absence of gender equality and human rights considerations in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005, the new global agreement on how to deliver and manage aid. It was an exciting time to be involved as the monitoring and evaluation plans were being discussed more fully. The project sought to integrate gender equality and women's human rights into the new aid modalities. Amongst other objectives, it aimed to support the efforts of countries receiving aid to fulfil their international obligations on gender equality and to match those obligations and commitments with adequate financial allocations in national development programmes and budgets. Initially, the issue of what indicators to use to measure the project's results was a puzzling one for the Steering Committee and became an important part of the 'to do' list. What would gender-sensitive indicators look like? It was hard to imagine what indicators could be used to monitor what was taking place in such a variety of locations – 12 countries in total – where the project was to be piloted. While mapping studies of each country were being commissioned to assist with the task, I strongly felt that the production of gender-sensitive indicators was a complex, longer term undertaking which went far beyond a few weeks' study. It was then that I became interested in studying the subject of gender-sensitive indicators with the practical intention of contributing to the discussions on aid effectiveness and more specifically to the EC/UN Partnership project.<sup>1</sup> Although my involvement in the project lasted just a few months, it was enough to provide an insight into the complexities of the work, the needs, and to be inspired by the idea of the worthiness of pursuing the study of gender-sensitive indicators for aid effectiveness in an academic research setting.

### Background

The word aid is typically used to refer to many kinds of foreign aid: military, humanitarian, emergency, food and more. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the history of aid

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<sup>1</sup> This project, including its indicators, is one of the subjects of discussion in chapter 3 of this thesis alongside 2 other initiatives that were developed to provide a gender dimension to aid effectiveness.



goes back to its use in the military to help warring parties considered of strategic importance. Churches and voluntary agencies who have relied on private funds have also long contributed to overall aid efforts (individually and more often as part of colonisation efforts) in matters of health, education, water, food, etc. (Riddell, 2008). In the nineteenth and twentieth century, in the context of the expansion of capitalism, Western powers used it in their colonies to improve their infrastructure and increase the colonies' economic output (Foreign Aid, 2013). In the context of communism, after the Russian revolution, aid was used by the Communist Party also for industrialisation and infrastructure purposes but with the goal of bringing equality between the member states of the Soviet Union (Tchuigoua, 2009).

In this thesis aid refers to official development aid. Most countries that provide official aid are members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD was founded in 1961 and is composed of 34 countries. Its mission is 'to promote policies that will enhance the economic and social wellbeing of people around the world' (OECD website, accessed 10 October 2014). Development aid, also known as overseas development assistance (ODA) or development co-operation is defined by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD as:

...those flows to countries and territories of the DAC list of ODA recipients and to multilateral institutions which are:

- i. provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies; and
- ii. each transaction of which:
  - a. is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective; and
  - b. is concessional in character and conveys a grant element of at least 25 percent (calculated at a rate of discount of 10 percent).

(Source: [www.oecd.org/investment/stats/officialdevelopmentassistance/definitionandcoverage.htm](http://www.oecd.org/investment/stats/officialdevelopmentassistance/definitionandcoverage.htm))

In its current 'institutionalised' form, development aid is attributed to go back to the post war era when the successful reconstruction of Europe (through the Marshall Plan) provided the impetus for the expansion of development efforts towards the countries of the Global South, at the time seen by the United States to be in need of economic development.<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>2</sup> The Marshall Plan was implemented by the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, which was established in 1948. Later, in 1961, the organisation became the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

context within which the institutionalisation of development aid took place is significant for understanding the importance of gender equality in development aid. The institutionalisation of development aid came about in the same time period of the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the birth of the Bretton Woods institutions – the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank – both of which have played a central role in crafting development agendas. It was also the start of the cold war period when many nationalist struggles against colonial powers were taking shape and many aid packages and trade regimes were being devised by the superpowers in support to their own security interests. This scenario had a significant impact on the development alternatives that were available to post colonial countries up until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Rai, 2011). As such, discussions about aid are necessarily linked to discussions about development: their combined history is one of power and power struggles where countries providing aid have had the upper hand. These historical contexts and scenarios within which aid was situated ‘were deeply gendered and framed gender relations; the assumptions about universality led to a gender blindness which translated into particular modalities of gendered modernities and development’ (Rai, 2011: 14). Gender blindness is defined as ignoring the gender dimension(s) or failing to notice the differences between women and men in analysis, policies or development activities (Esplen and Bell, 2007).

Although it is outside of the scope of this thesis to chart the history of development aid, it is necessary to refer to the most salient parts of this history as it relates to the place of gender equality in development aid and its measurement. After a few decades of aid relations, the adverse effects of gender blind development on women were made visible most prominently in the 1970s by Esther Boserup (1970) who highlighted the significant but yet unrecognised role of women in economic development. This subsequently led to widespread recognition of the importance of women in development (the WID approach) and, further of the need, not just to add women to the existing development paradigm but to ‘engender’ development – the Gender and Development approach. The women in development approach is considered to have a more liberal positivistic orientation while the gender and development approach has a more constructivist, critical and structural orientation. This shift from women in development towards gender and development recognised that just adding women to the existing development approach was not dealing



with 'the core issue of structural privileging of men, the denigration and subordination of women and 'feminised labour', the depoliticisation of women's subordination in the family and the workplace, or the pressures on women to work the triple shift (familial, informal and formal activities)' (Peterson, 2005:502). On the other hand, a focus on gender – where gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women (Riley, 2008) – afforded the opportunity to question what type of development is desirable, what gets valued and accounted for (including work and types of work). The shift towards 'gender' also allowed for the examination of gender ideologies that explain men's reluctance to do what was seen as 'women's work' (in the household, for example) while also critiquing narratives of victimisation that deny the agency and resistance exercised by people (Peterson, 2005: 502).<sup>3</sup> In development planning and policy, taking gender into account involves conducting gender analysis – the systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and social relations in order to identify, understand and redress inequalities based on gender (Esplen and Bell, 2007).

Despite the theoretical move from women in development to gender and development, many aid and development policies continued to be gender blind, one of the most notorious examples being the case of the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) that most of the countries receiving aid have been subjected to since the 1980s. Following various crises in the 1970s (oil) and early 1980s (Latin American debt crisis) the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund established SAPs and stabilization programmes for countries to implement in order to receive loans. These SAPs were based on the implementation of prescribed economic liberalisation policies, which in the long term proved detrimental to most societies. Their (gendered) negative impact has been abundantly researched and their failures have been widely acknowledged (Peterson, 2014; Antrobus, 2004; Momsen, 2004; Zuckerman and Garret, 2003; Rai, 2002; Stiglitz, 2002; Tsikata, 1995; Elson, 1992, and others).

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<sup>3</sup> During the time of the shift from WID to GAD, the first international conference on Women took place in Mexico in 1975 with objectives that became part of the work of the UN on women: the promotion of full gender equality and elimination of gender based discrimination, the integration and full participation of women in development, and increasing contribution by women in strengthening world peace. A few months following the conference, the UN General Assembly declared 1976-1985 the UN Decade for Women.



By the 1990s coinciding with the fall of the iron curtain and the onset of economic neoliberalism through globalisation, a number of critical questions were being asked about the delivery and effectiveness of official aid. These included donor country concerns about reducing costs, and concerns over a long history of delayed aid disbursements which impeded countries receiving aid to plan and implement aid programmes in a timely manner. Countries of the global South also faced serious administrative burdens as they were supposed to address multiple donor requirements and reporting standards which varied from one another. Further concerns included two very contentious issues in the world of foreign aid: aid conditionality and tied aid. Aid conditionality refers to a common practice of many donors whereby they place conditions as to how and when countries receiving aid are supposed to spend the aid received. The conditions usually advantage donors' own interests and priorities. Tied aid refers to yet another practice of donors whereby they stipulate that aid money must be spent on products and services from the country providing the aid or from a selected group of countries.

Most recently, coinciding with the drive to achieve the millennium development goals (MDGs), a new international agreement focused on establishing a more coherent approach to aid management and delivery was signed in 2005 under the auspices of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development: the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. In its statement of resolve, the Paris Declaration points to the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs as drivers for taking 'far reaching and monitorable actions to reform the way aid is delivered and managed' (Paris Declaration, 2005). Forty four years since donor countries first committed to increase the volumes of aid (by providing 0.7% of their countries' Gross National Income), the Paris Declaration of 2005 again reasserts the need to augment the volumes of aid in order to achieve the goals and of the need to strengthen governance.<sup>4</sup> It also speaks of increasing the impact of aid in reducing poverty and inequality, increasing growth, building capacity and accelerating achievement of the MDGs (Paris Declaration, 2005).

The MDGs, agreed at the Millennium summit in September 2000 to be achieved by the end of this year, 2015, are the world's internationally agreed, time-specific targets for

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<sup>4</sup> The 0.7% goal established in 1972 remains largely unmet. By 2010, only a few countries had met it and some exceeded this commitment: Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden (Regan, 2012).

addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions. There are 8 goals with 48 indicators attached to them and a host of UN mechanisms to ensure their implementation. Gender equality and women's empowerment are a part of the MDGs and it is recognised that they are key to the fulfilment of the other goals. They are:

- (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- (2) Achieve universal primary education
- (3) Promote gender equality and empower women
- (4) Reduce child mortality
- (5) Improve maternal health
- (6) Combat HIV/ AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- (7) Ensure environmental sustainability
- (8) Promote a global partnership for development

Despite these statements, the core focus of the Paris Declaration is on establishing efficient money management systems to deliver and monitor aid. There is a nominal passing reference to gender equality (paragraph 42) but neither gender equality nor human rights are mentioned as part of any indicator of aid effectiveness. So there are two issues at stake here: the suitability of an efficiency based approach to aid effectiveness, and the absence of gender and human rights considerations. While efficient money management systems are necessary in making aid more effective, their establishment alone does not necessarily translate into effective outcomes. This technical, efficiency based focus of the Paris Declaration has been widely criticised (Schoenstein and Alemany, 2011; Better Aid, 2011; Easterly, 2009; de la Cruz, 2009; Alemany and Craviotto, 2008; Craviotto 2008; de la Cruz, Barrig and Rodriguez, 2008; Meyer and Schultz, 2008; Gaynor, 2007). If aid money is to have a positive impact the term 'effectiveness of aid' needs to be broadened to include not just good financial procedures but also the achievement of development aid goals. The gender blindness of the Paris Declaration, which has been denounced by many feminists and gender advocates, has taken place despite the pre-existing WID/ GAD discourse and the many international commitments to respecting women's rights, for example: the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), to name just two such commitments.



### **Justification: the importance of this thesis topic**

The topic of aid effectiveness was a prominent feature of the academic debate since before the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was signed in 2005. The 'conventional' literature on aid effectiveness is vast and split on the issue. Questions regarding the effectiveness of aid have remained focused on the relationship of aid and growth, based on the assumption that aid is effective when it helps increase economic growth. The research has thus dealt with whether, under what conditions, and to what extent, aid money has helped countries increase their Gross Domestic Product (Burnside and Dollar, 2000; Hansen and Tarp, 2000; Easterly, 2003; Bourguignon and Sundberg, 2007; Doucouliagos and Paldam, 2009). This focus on aid and growth has relied on GDP as a measure despite widespread recognition that GDP is not a measure of development nor is it an appropriate index to measure growth, a point I will develop in the first chapter. Various laureates and a number of research institutes and policy makers have openly acknowledged this fact and looked into alternative measures that can provide an accurate picture of a society's wellbeing beyond economic growth (Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi, 2008; Costanza, Heart, Posner and Talberth, 2009; Ravindran, 2004; Soubotina, 2000). So far, the discussions around the measurement of aid effectiveness have not specifically considered feminist theories of gender and development which focus on the distinct impacts of development processes on women and men. Although many articles on aid effectiveness have been written by feminist advocates, the feminist academic literature on aid effectiveness is scarce on the issue of measuring such effectiveness in a gender responsive manner.

This thesis is concerned with the issue of gender blindness of the indicators of aid effectiveness set out in the latest international consensus on managing and delivering foreign aid 'the Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness'. I will argue that for aid to be truly effective, gender needs to be included in the aid effectiveness agenda explicitly and that corresponding gender-sensitive indicators need to be developed and implemented.

### **Gender-sensitive Indicators of Aid Effectiveness: the existing literature**

Gender-sensitive measurements, both qualitative and quantitative, are vital for taking gender (in) equality into account in policy making. They enable better planning and are instrumental for holding governments and institutions accountable to their commitments



on gender equality. Yet, it has been acknowledged, 'measurement techniques and gender-sensitive data remain limited and poorly utilised, making it difficult to know if efforts are on track to achieving gender equality goals and commitments' (Esplen and Bell, 2007; Moser 2007).

Through a review of the literature on gender-sensitive indicators of aid effectiveness, I discovered that there have been three past initiatives to provide a gender dimension to the new aid modalities. The initiatives had been proposed by gender advocates within some of the international institutions working to ensure a gender perspective in the implementation of the Paris Declaration (GENDERNET, 2011b; Etta, 2009; EC/UNIFEM/ILO, 2008). While they are the creative product of committed gender and women's advocates who see opportunities to secure a place for gender in the new aid agenda<sup>5</sup>, the question of trying to make gender 'fit' belatedly into the Paris Declaration makes one wonder whether this approach to aid effectiveness is transformative enough and whether it is sufficient to address the indicators' gap in the aid effectiveness agenda. In the absence of academic articles related to these three initiatives, I chart and discuss them in this thesis (chapter 3). Second, the literature revealed the presence of a gender equality policy marker to measure aid (but not its effectiveness) developed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This policy marker is a tool to identify aid that aims to achieve gender equality and strengthen women's empowerment. It allows donors to disclose whether gender equality is a principal objective or a significant objective of a given development activity. However, the gender equality policy marker only highlights donors' intentions and does not track implementation, changes of priorities or the outcomes of the activities being carried out (OECD 2007). As such, it cannot be considered a measure of aid being effective. More recent efforts to develop gender indicators by UN Women for gender programming are not considered in this thesis in order to preserve the focus on indicators of aid effectiveness. Similarly, I deliberately don't engage with the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals as these are still being negotiated and cannot yet be fully analysed.

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<sup>5</sup> I use the term 'new aid agenda' to refer to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness throughout the thesis.

While no specific gender indicators for aid effectiveness could be found in the literature, I would argue that Moser's (2007) review of other existing gender indicators used in development did provide insights for the creation of indicators in the new aid architecture<sup>6</sup>, including valuable recommendations to donors and governments in accounting for gender equality. The recommendations include: to establish accountability systems that include gender-sensitive aid performance indicators, to include and build capacity on gender budgeting initiatives<sup>7</sup>, and to support advocacy and women's groups as well as institutions to voice and respond to women's needs. With respect to the indicators the report recommends to attend to the development of sets of gender indicators which 'should include harmonised indicators appropriate to the country level, feeding up to regional sets and even an international set of agreed harmonised gender indicators' (Moser, 2007: 46). Overall, and in recognition of the existing 'plethora' of gender-sensitive indicators in relation to development, the report concludes that 'while there is a need to continue to refine international composite indices, and to develop better ways of measuring specific dimensions such as the gendered aspects of poverty, empowerment, etc., the priority is to better utilise the indicators we already have' (Moser, 2007: 46). These include, for example, the Gender Inequality Index (GII). This thesis, thus, will build on Moser's recommendations while seeking to contribute to the nascent feminist literature on the subject of aid effectiveness with particular focus on assessing, critiquing and developing gender-sensitive indicators of aid effectiveness. A failure to account for the gender dimensions of aid effectiveness, it will be argued, not only endangers the achievement of development aid goals but risks reproducing old forms of gender inequality and creating new ones.

My **hypothesis** is that *Gender-related indicators such as the Gender Inequality Index (GII) must be essential to measuring aid effectiveness because of their emphasis on capturing inequalities between men and women in key areas addressed by development goals (reproductive health, empowerment, and labour market participation).*

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<sup>6</sup> The term new aid architecture refers to the policies and structures comprising the new approach to aid effectiveness.

<sup>7</sup> Gender budgeting, or gender responsive budgets, refers to the practice of planning, analysing, monitoring and auditing budgets in a gender sensitive manner.



In order to explore this hypothesis, the thesis will interrogate the understanding of effectiveness expressed in the Paris Declaration and the absence of gender indicators. It will therefore explore the following research questions:

- (1) What constitutes aid effectiveness?
- (2) What concept of aid effectiveness is found in the Paris Declaration? What economic suppositions about growth and governance underlie the aid effectiveness agenda?
- (3) What indicators have been used to measure effectiveness under the Paris Declaration?
- (4) Is the Paris Declaration gender-sensitive?
- (5) What are the limitations, from a gender-sensitive viewpoint, of current indicators of aid effectiveness?
- (6) What are the characteristics of gender-sensitive indicators of aid effectiveness?
- (7) Could existing gender-related development indices, such as the Gender Inequality Index, be useful in measuring aid effectiveness?

In developing responses to these research questions, the thesis will analyse the process that led to the Paris Declaration and will demonstrate that gender and international agreements on ensuring human rights and, most particularly, women's human rights were ignored. The thesis will therefore argue for the necessity of engendering the conceptualisation and measurement of aid effectiveness. Initially, when the plan for this thesis was proposed, the Gender-related Development Index and the Gender Empowerment Measure were the most popular gender-related development indicators available and the intention was to test their worthiness as potential indices towards the assessment of gender-sensitive aid effectiveness. However, during the course of the research, in 2010 to be precise, these indices were replaced by the Gender Inequality Index. I therefore readjusted the hypothesis of the thesis to reflect this change in recognition that this latest, most improved, index presented a better opportunity as it was designed to address the pitfalls of its predecessors.



## Theoretical framework

In order to create a framework for defining and measuring aid effectiveness from a gender-sensitive point of view, my thesis will draw on theories in Feminist Political Economy (FPE), supplemented by Gender and Development (GAD) thinking, and studies on Feminist Epistemologies (FE). The application of these approaches to the analysis of the new aid architecture is necessary to make visible the need for questioning the current understanding of aid effectiveness (as reflected in the Paris Declaration), the predominant neoliberal economic development paradigm whose goals aid is intended to support, and the practices that maintain it, including how effectiveness is measured. These theories shall also provide guidance as to what are the features of gender-sensitive approaches and practices that can generate corresponding indicators to measure the effectiveness of aid.

*Feminist Political Economy (FPE)* critiques neoliberalism as a system which focuses simply on the market economy with growth and accumulation as its primary goals. Conversely, FPE focuses on the provision of human needs and well-being. It employs gender as a defining category and attends to the lived experiences of men, women, families and what it means to be a human person. FPE reveals and clarifies how gender determines or influences the social and political relationships and structures of power and the differential economic effects that flow from these relationships and structures (Riley, 2008). FPE will be used to critique neoliberalism and the aid structures and policies flowing from it.

*Gender and Development theory (GAD)* looks at global and gender inequalities and analyses how development policies reshape gender relations – the socially constructed and, in most instances, hierarchical relations between men and women that tend to disadvantage women. The problem, as seen in GAD, is that unequal power relations embedded in the current system prevent women's full participation in the development process and thus, hinder equitable development for men and women. In GAD, the goal is equitable, sustainable development, with both women and men as decision makers. In order for equitable, sustainable development to occur, it is vital to empower women and transform unequal relations. According to GAD, some of the strategies to achieve these goals include: (1) reconceptualising the development process, taking gender and global inequalities into account, (2) identifying and addressing practical needs, as determined by women and men, to improve their condition, at the same time addressing women's strategic interests, and (3) address strategic interests of the poor through people centred development (Parpart,

Connelly and Barriteau, 2000). Specifically, the analytical tools of GAD are useful to interrogate and deepen understanding of how the current approach to development aid influence key areas identified by feminist theory while also providing a positive source for the creation of gender indicators.

More recent GAD scholarship is particularly useful in pointing out the complexities of institutionalising gender-sensitive practices in what has become a 'development industry', and the ways in which the meaning of gender equality have changed even losing its critical edge (Cornwall, 2007). Gender has become part of the development vocabulary without necessarily changing the 'business as usual' imperative in development agencies. Instead of challenging the patriarchal power of the development industry, gender is also being used to 'add value' to existing narratives of development (Mama, 2004). The work of gender mainstreaming supposed to be enacted in all policies and programmes, has thus 'run adrift' often becoming everyone's and no one's responsibility (Cornwall, 2007). This scenario makes it all the more difficult to both trace and construct meaningful indicators of aid effectiveness for gender equality. And yet, significant expertise on gender has been developed with tangible gains on the ground at times revealing tensions between the adequacy of 'expert-driven' initiatives and the need for these to be driven by gender-sensitive participatory processes (Goetz, 2004).

Feminist Political Economy has been described as a blend with other areas of feminist scholarship such as gender and development studies, feminist economics, and international relations, amongst others (Peterson, 2005). They can thus help explain the significance of gender blindness in the Paris Declaration and provide evidence as to the importance of engendering the still evolving aid effectiveness agenda. The focus of the Paris Declaration on establishing effective management systems to deliver and monitor aid, it will be argued, reveals a technocratic view of aid effectiveness based on efficiency and underpinned by neoliberal assumptions and indicators. The neoliberal model of development has been broadly criticized for ignoring the gender dimensions of development, for exacerbating gender inequalities and for relying on gender blind indicators of progress (such as GDP) that track primarily economic growth. The neoliberal model of economic development and the interpretation of effectiveness enshrined in the



Paris Declaration, including its indicators, are therefore in need of scrutiny if aid is to contribute to the goals of human development and welfare of both men and women (including the Millennium Development Goals).

*Feminist epistemologies* question the nature of knowledge and the validity of knowledge claims. Traditional (mainstream) epistemologies, it has been established, have systematically excluded the possibility that women could be the agents of knowledge. Feminists have critiqued traditional epistemologies for being specifically 'male' and have argued the existence of specifically female epistemologies. They have asserted the significance and legitimacy of emotional, politically engaged, and particularistic ways of knowing characterised as 'female' and usually excluded from traditional knowledge generation (Kemp and Squires, 1997). Significant levels of participation of women in development and aid (effectiveness) processes, it can be argued, may allow new ways of knowing to inform policy making and provide a more holistic view of the range of factors involved in human development. This includes the conceptualisation of corresponding measures/ indicators of aid effectiveness ultimately based on this broader view of human development and the policies and processes that will enhance it. The analysis of existing indicators and proposals to engender the Paris Declaration will draw on this theory exposing the value as well as some of the issues and contradictions posed by them. Feminist Epistemologies will be valuable as tools to identify alternative conceptualisations of aid effectiveness emerging from the research, and from the case study in particular.

## **Methods**

This thesis utilises a mixed methods approach to research. It draws both on secondary data and primary data (from interviews) and uses a case study focused on Nicaragua. The exploration of the case involves the examination of five distinct scenarios (or lenses) of measuring the effectiveness of aid for the period immediately following the signing of the Paris Declaration (between 2005 and 2014). For the case study, I apply intersectional analysis, a method based on "the study of the relationships amongst multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations" (Mc Call, 2005). This method posits that people often live multiple, layered identities derived from their social relations, history, and the ways in which structures of power operate. It aims to expose how different types of discrimination and disadvantage that occur as a result of a combination of



identities produce a substantively distinct experience (AWID, 2004). Intersectionality is fitting in the particular context of Nicaragua as a place with a history of colonialism, and as a multi-ethnic society attempting to build a participatory democracy. The research study is therefore desk-based and uses diverse textual material, supplemented by semi-structured interviews with some of those working within international aid organisations and with some of the beneficiaries of aid (conducted by phone and in writing). The work draws heavily on policy material produced by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) for their advocacy purposes on aid effectiveness. By doing so, I hope to make their analysis and contributions more visible in the academic literature.

The first part of the research draws mainly on secondary data. The material includes a range of international agreements and policy documents on aid effectiveness available in the public domain (national development plans, donor government strategies on aid effectiveness, mapping studies on gender equality, etc). It draws on academic literature, newspapers, a range of regional, national and global reports produced by the relevant official institutions (World Bank, UN agencies, OECD) and, as stated above, by civil society organisations engaged monitoring the official processes of aid effectiveness at the policy level. I use their advocacy material for their insightful analysis and critique shall enrich the academic literature, despite being conceived for a different political purpose. In addition, I draw on some of the minutes from CSOs and OECD meetings that are publically available, working papers, policy documents, and a diversity of websites. I also draw on information reports circulated via email by women's working groups of networks monitoring the official aid effectiveness process. I analyse the content of all these sources of information, looking for and engaging with possible contradictions within or between the texts. For the exploration of empirical evidence regarding the alternative indicators created so far to provide a gender dimension to aid effectiveness, I draw on primary data from conducting a semi-structured phone interview with three members of the OECD / GENDERNET staff based in Paris. The interview questions were aimed at understanding the process of creating gender-sensitive indicators to monitor aid effectiveness within the context of the very organisation that led the (gender blind) Paris Declaration of 2005. A template of the questions guiding the interview can be found in this thesis' appendix.

The second part of the research involving the case study uses primary data from conducting semi-structured interviews with some of the beneficiaries of aid, which supplement the secondary data. Given that my first language is Spanish, I have been able to obtain the perspectives of those working through that language, including through the interviews, and through additional relevant academic material, local newspapers, and newsletters from the organisations and initiatives under study. I have also consulted annual reports to and by donors from these initiatives (in English and in Spanish), as well as local government websites and documents available online. This additional access to information through Spanish language has greatly enhanced my perspectives on the topic.

The case study focuses on Nicaragua and its experience with the new aid agenda. The purpose of the case study in the thesis is to explore how the new aid agenda has been implemented and dealt with in the context of that country. In particular, I am interested in getting a sense of how aid effectiveness is being measured by women's organisations working with gender equality issues there, both from the perspective of donors and of the organisations receiving aid. The case is not intended to make generalisations about Nicaragua or about aid effectiveness in that country. Instead, it shall offer an illustration of the complexities and dynamics at play in the implementation of the new aid agenda paying particular attention to the practices of measuring the effectiveness of aid in a gender-sensitive manner.

The reasons for choosing Nicaragua as the site of the case study are both practical and out of interest in the complex circumstances within which gender equality struggles are situated in that country. First, on the practical side, there is a sufficient amount of gender-related data on the subject of aid effectiveness for this county to make the research viable (though not without limitations). Data availability in terms of tracking aid and its effects, especially in matters of gender equality, has been a long-term research constraint even beyond gender equality issues. Since Nicaragua participated in the EC/ UN Partnership project for Development and Peace (examined in the third chapter of the thesis) there are a number of valuable resources on aid effectiveness and gender equality that are not normally available for most countries. Second, in terms of my interest in the politics of the country, Nicaragua follows a dual track on economic development: a neoliberal track as a member of the OECD, and an anti-neoliberal track as a member of the Bolivarian Alliance



of the Americas (ALBA). The presence of opposing economic development paradigms presents a particularly interesting scenario and raises important questions about how development aid is dealt with in furthering gender equality goals in that country: how is aid for gender equality accounted for? Is there a separate system of accountability for aid received from the OECD and that of the ALBA? How is gender equality conceptualised by each paradigm and what type of activities are supported by each? Who benefits? A further reason for selecting Nicaragua is founded on my personal interest on the recent history of gender equality politics in that country. Back in the 1970s and 1980s the Sandinista revolution had mobilised thousands of women under the promise of their emancipation. But in reality, gender equality politics took an unforeseeable turn after the Sandinista victory leading to antagonistic relations between the President and many civil society organisations, especially feminists and women's advocates (including divisions between these two). This turbulent scenario poses many specific challenges for the distribution of aid towards gender equality goals in a country that claims to be forging a participatory democracy. As a Latin American woman, I can relate to this kind of complex scenario and find it compelling for the analysis of gender-sensitive indicators of aid effectiveness.

The case study will interrogate how the aid effectiveness agenda was implemented in Nicaragua from 5 different perspectives: 1) using the indicators of the Paris Declaration, 2) by considering the Gender Inequality Index as a source of gender sensitivity for aid effectiveness, 3) by looking at project funded by the Canadian government involving the Miskito indigenous community in Nicaragua, 4) by looking at a project funded by the British government in Nicaragua focused on women's Labour Rights, and 5) by looking at a joint programme between the MDG-Achievement Fund and the Nicaraguan government, which promotes women's participation and gender budgets. In scenarios three to five, a number of questions will be explored with funders and beneficiaries as to how they understand and define 'effectiveness' in relation to development aid and gender equality.

The purpose of the case is to engage with the hypothesis and research questions more specifically paying close attention to how effectiveness is interpreted and measured by the different actors. Further details about the methods, data, actors, and questions guiding the interviews in regards to the case study work will be made explicit in the findings chapter.

## Ethics

*Author's Positionality:* While my central motivation and purpose (as described in the introduction) emerged from my previous work, as a Puerto Rican woman, the topic of aid effectiveness is particularly appealing to me. This appeal is partly due to the similarities between the approaches, discourses and dynamics that have historically shaped relations between donors and countries beneficiaries of aid, and those shaping my country's colonial history. While Puerto Rico is still a US colony and I can relate to many of the experiences lived by some of the peoples in so called 'developing countries', I also recognise my privileged position having lived in various Western countries, and worked with issues of women's rights and gender equality through development education. I first learned about gender and development through the International Peace Studies Masters' programme of Trinity College Dublin. I learned to speak the language of development and rights through my work in the Non- Governmental Development sector in Ireland and Europe. My life and work experiences both from a colonial upbringing and a life in 'the West' shape my perspectives.

For this thesis I sought and obtained ethics approval from Trinity College Dublin. In compliance with research practices and the principles of openness, honesty and integrity, I sought formal consent to participate in the semi-structured interviews in writing and by phone. This was done after sharing the research plan, including research purpose, publication plans, and interview questions with the persons involved in the interviews. The question of confidentiality/ anonymity was opened up to the interviewees and their desire to not be named has been respected. Interviewees were informed of their right to withdraw from the research, including the withdrawal of the data they have provided. Similarly the interviewees were informed of their right to access their data under the freedom of information act. All this was done in writing via email ahead of the interviews. Most of the interviews were recorded to ensure the accuracy of records and to ease subsequent data analysis. Two interviews were not recorded due to technical difficulties. Consent to participate and to record interviews was sought in writing via the consent form. A template of the consent forms can be found in the thesis' appendix.



In order to follow good standard research practices, I drew on the research ethics guidelines provided by the AIATSIS model.<sup>8</sup> The reason for this choice is centred on the involvement of indigenous peoples in one of the projects composing the case study (AMICA) and with whom I conducted an interview. The AIATSIS model provides guidelines for working with indigenous peoples in Australia. In the absence of research guidelines specific to working with indigenous peoples in Nicaragua, I chose to draw on this model. Below is a description of the ethics principles applicable to this study's context including a description of how these were put into practice:

1. *Recognition of the diversity and uniqueness of peoples, as well as of individuals:* Linguistic diversity is recognised for the Mískito people in Nicaragua. The interview regarding project one with the project coordinator of AMICA – a Miskito indigenous organisation – was conducted using Spanish as it is common for the Mískito to speak Spanish. The highest degree of linguistic sensitivity to ensure terminology is clear and respectful of the interviewee (s) was observed. In further observance of this principle, no stereotypes were applied in the interview questions nor will extrapolations be made from the research in a manner that generalises from understandings of one Indigenous community or individuals from a community to others or to all Indigenous peoples.
2. *Indigenous knowledge, practices and innovations must be respected, protected and maintained* – all knowledge regarding AMICA's practices and work in evaluating and reporting the effectiveness of the project were acknowledged formally in recognition that such knowledge makes a significant contribution to the research. Permission to publish any part of the thesis where AMICA's contribution is cited will be sought in writing if ever needed.
3. *The right to benefit and not be disadvantaged by the research project* – it is not anticipated that the interviews or any part of the research will disadvantage or compromise any member of AMICA or the Mískito community.
4. *Plans should be agreed for the managing use and access to research results* – this was addressed when obtaining consent to participate in the interviews. Participants were offered a copy of the dissertation should they wish one. They were also informed that

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<sup>8</sup> Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (2011) published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

their data will be stored safely in electronic format in accordance to section 6.3 of Trinity College Dublin Guidelines.<sup>9</sup>

5. The interviewees were made aware that the publication plans for this work are so far limited to the usual Trinity College Dublin standard for PhD dissertations (copy held at the library). They were also made aware of the possibility that the chapter related to the Nicaraguan study could be submitted for publication in academic journals at a future time. This was done in writing through the consent form, which is available as an appendix.

### **Limitations of the case study**

A. Data availability – data for the cases can be described as limited although it is the best available for this type of study. Rarely can data so specific to aid and gender equality be found, not least on the new aid *effectiveness* agenda and gender equality.

B. Interviews – very few – one written (GENDERNET: 3 people; Project one: 1 phone interview, and one written interview; Project two: one phone interview; Joint programme: none). Small non-governmental organisations like those participating in the case study tend to have only one staff person (sometimes part time only) allocated to projects. In the case of the joint programme in the case study, three staff members were initially enthusiastic about the interview but one person has been relocated while the other two are simply not responsive to being interviewed, despite initial disposition and numerous attempts to contact them.

C. The reports that informed the analysis of the MDG-Fund joint programme were written considering a limited amount of the participating municipalities. So the specificities regarding the good practices followed for the joint programme are not exhaustive.

The thesis will proceed as follows:

Chapter one '**Feminist Perspectives on Neoliberalism and Aid Effectiveness**' considers the antecedents and basic tenets of neoliberalism, the neoliberal macro-economic environment, and development aid policies currently being pursued. Issues of gender equality and women's human rights within this system will be raised supported by feminist

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<sup>9</sup> Trinity College Dublin Policy on Good Research Practice (2009)



theory. This is relevant to identify what understanding of development aid supposed to be adding value to (research question 2) and whether measuring its effectiveness with gender in mind in this context is possible at all. It will also examine some of the concerns regarding the implicit and explicit indicators of effectiveness guiding the Paris Declaration. The segment will argue that gender is essential to aid effectiveness and that corresponding indicators need to be developed and used.

Chapter two entitled '**Background to the Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness and Feminist Analysis**' will contextualise the rise of the aid effectiveness discourse by providing the necessary background information about the main processes and instruments comprising the new aid architecture that led to the Paris Declaration (and beyond). Drawing from the earlier discussion on chapter one, this chapter will look at the Paris Declaration more concretely raising the research questions 1 and 3, namely 'what constitutes aid effectiveness' and 'what are the indicators used to measure such effectiveness' respectively. The segment also seeks to establish the relationship between gender equality, human rights and aid effectiveness.

Chapter three '**Engendering Aid Effectiveness Indicators: Assessing the Proposals to Date**' seeks to explore empirical evidence of gender-sensitive indicators of aid effectiveness that were developed following the signing of the Paris Declaration. It will take a retrospective look at three particular initiatives that were created for providing a gender dimension to aid effectiveness within the official framework set out in the Paris Declaration of 2005. The chapter will analyse their merits and drawbacks with views to inform future approaches to measuring aid effectiveness. Looking beyond these three initiatives, and in search for better alternatives, the chapter also seeks to reflect upon the human development paradigm and other popular gender indices that may potentially be useful to measure the effectiveness of aid.

As the previous three chapters established the background to the new aid modalities, and a feminist critique of mainstream neoliberal aid effectiveness, I turn to a case study focused on Nicaragua to explore the possibilities for engendering aid effectiveness in that context. The fourth chapter is therefore dedicated to the presenting the **findings of the case study**. It will begin by providing details about the **research methods** utilised, discussing the

rationale and purpose of the case study, details of the data used, and information regarding the projects and programme under study. The case study will interrogate the gender-sensitive measuring of aid effectiveness in Nicaragua from 5 different perspectives: 1) using the indicators of the Paris Declaration, 2) by considering the Gender Inequality Index (GII) as a source of gender sensitivity for aid effectiveness, 3) by looking at a project funded by the Canadian government in Nicaragua, 4) by looking at a project funded by the British government in Nicaragua, and 5) by looking at a joint programme between the MDG-Fund and the government of Nicaragua. The purpose of the case study is to engage with the hypothesis and the research questions more specifically, paying close attention to how effectiveness is interpreted and measured by the different actors.

Following the case study, I will turn to present the **analysis of the findings** in chapter 5. I will do so by drawing from the thesis theoretical framework in order to address the hypothesis and research questions more concretely.

Finally, the thesis' **conclusion** will recapitulate on the main arguments that were established, including the critique of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and its indicators. The section seeks to highlight how the analysis of alternative indicators and conceptualisations of effectiveness that were explored (through the case study) contribute to the literature on aid effectiveness. It will finalise by laying out some key recommendations about the process and shape of establishing gender-sensitive indicators.



## **Chapter 1. Feminist Perspectives on Neoliberalism and Aid Effectiveness**

### **1.1. Introduction**

What concept of Aid Effectiveness is found in the Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness? What economic suppositions about growth and governance underlie the aid effectiveness agenda? To answer these research questions, it is necessary to contextualise the Paris Declaration into the wider development paradigm which frames it. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness – while it plays a vital role in determining donors' priorities and approaches to development aid in recent years – is not a standalone agreement, but rather one component of a larger framework of financing for development.

This chapter demonstrates that the neoliberal economic paradigm underpins the official financing for development framework, the main development policies being pursued, and the measures by which the effectiveness of aid is being determined. The chapter will also show that issues of gender equality and women's human rights are being neglected in this paradigm. The segment will argue that gender and human rights are essential to aid effectiveness and therefore corresponding indicators need to be used.

The chapter is divided in 2 major sections: the first deals with neoliberalism and the second (starting in point 1.4) focuses on feminist critiques of neoliberalism. The chapter will begin by exploring definitions of neoliberalism and will discuss its theoretical underpinnings while also providing some historical context on neoliberal thinking. A closer look at the specifics of what is understood as neoliberal policy will follow, investigating the rationale for such policies in the context of foreign aid within the internationally agreed frameworks and recently established aid priorities. Thereafter, the second section of the chapter, which mirrors the first section in structure, uses a feminist political economy perspective to critique the core ideas and assumptions upon which neoliberalism is based, namely those of mainstream liberal economics. In particular, the section will highlight the gender dimensions of the neoliberal policies being pursued through development aid with special focus on trade liberalisation – the internationally proclaimed engine of development (Monterrey Consensus, 2002) and financial liberalisation. Finally, the chapter will question

the logic of using the current measuring tools of neoliberalism to make significant judgements on aid policy in the context of the newly established aid effectiveness agenda.

## **1.2. Neoliberalism**

### **1.2.1. Neoliberalism: Core Ideas and Assumptions Explored**

Neoliberalism as a term is commonly used to refer to the new revival of liberal economics. The use of the term 'liberal' in economics is different from its use in politics. Liberalism in economics refers to 'freeing up' the economy from regulation by removing barriers and restrictions to what actors can do. Liberalisation is defined as deregulation and other measures, including the lowering of trade barriers, aimed at opening up a market or industry to full competition (Financial Times, 2012).

Ferguson (2009) distinguishes between 'liberalism' and 'neoliberalism' as follows:

Liberalism is about finding the right balance between two spheres understood as properly distinct, if always related: state and market, public and private, 'the realm of the king and the proper domain of the merchant'. Neoliberalism puts governmental mechanisms developed in the private sphere to work within the state itself, so that even core functions of the state are either subcontracted out to private providers, or run 'like a business'. (Ferguson, 2009: 172)

In another sense, neoliberalism is often equated with globalisation (Pangestu, 2011; Visvanathan, 2011; Taguiwalo, 2005) and, notably, with the Washington Consensus (Santa Ana III, 2005). The Washington Consensus is a set of policy instruments set in Washington and advocated by the International Financial Institutions, notably the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, designed to transform economic systems into market economies. These policy instruments involve: privatisation as a means of production, deregulation of all economic activity (reduction of government's role), reduction of state's spending, currency devaluation, and the promotion of free markets for integration into the wider world capitalist economy (Baylis and Smith, 2001: 120). Both the way in which reforms have been implemented in these areas and the results they have produced have been heavily controversial. This will be expanded upon in a subsequent section of this chapter dedicated to the specifics of neoliberal policies.



But because of the nature of the changes in policies and governance required by the neoliberal approach, Madra and Adaman (2010) define neoliberalism as, not just the extension of the rule of the market and the limitation of the state, but rather as a radical reconfiguration of the relationship between the state and the market. They allude to Foucault's work who describes it as a form of governmentality, as the economisation of the social, because ultimately '... neoliberalism is a 'whole complex of savoirs' that seeks to govern the social by generalising the logic of economic incentives throughout the state apparatus and promoting its extension to the entire social domain' (Madra and Adaman, 2010: 544). Put more boldly, perhaps, Mirowski and Plehwe (2009) assert 'neoliberalism is first and foremost a theory of how to reengineer the state in order to guarantee the success of the market and its most important participants, modern corporations' (Mirowski and Plehwe, 2009: 161).

Modern neoliberal economics is rooted in the ideas generated by the Chicago School of Economics (1946), itself an offspring of the Austrian School of thought (dating back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>10</sup>. They favour that government intervention in the economy should be kept to the minimum under the belief that free market forces, rather than government intervention, can most effectively produce a balanced and non-inflationary rate of economic growth. Milton Friedman of the Chicago School is considered the leading exponent of the free-enterprise point of view in modern liberal economics while Adam Smith (1723-1790) is recognised as the father of economics and of capitalism. According to economic historians Mirowski and Plehwe (2009) and contrary to the belief of many, there seems to be no particular core scientific theory underpinning neoliberal thinking. Neoliberal ideas, they suggest, need to be seen in the context of the war years and the atomic era when the West was concerned with the rise of totalitarian regimes, socialism and communism. Thus, the Chicago School, they argue, should be understood as a politically oriented project and as one component of a specific larger national project of innovating doctrines of liberalism for the post war world. It was 'not a continuum of social doctrine or a clear analytical characterisation of the economy that formed the nucleus around which the Chicago school crystallised' (Mirowski and Plehwe, 2009: 159).

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<sup>10</sup> Methodological differences prompted the split of the Austrian school and the Chicago school but both of them advocate for the importance of social and market freedoms.

### 1.2.2. Classical Antecedents

Neoliberalism is based on the same core ideas and assumptions rooting classical economic theory. Its foundations rest on specific commitments to individualism and to a particular view of human nature: human nature as rational and human nature as self-interested (Hausman and Mc Pherson, 2008).

Individuals, mostly referred to as 'economic agents' in the literature, are the unit of analysis and assumed to be rational, self-interested and well informed seeking to maximise utility (to satisfy their preferences) and gain the most in a voluntary process of exchange (Hausman and Mc Pherson, 2008). According to classic economic theory the pursuit of individual self-interest will produce the greatest possible economic benefits for society as a whole through the power of the invisible hand of the market. It was the belief of Adam Smith (and that of many economists since) that such a market economy also respects individual liberty more than does any other economic arrangement which, according to Hausman and Mc Pherson (2008), 'results in a strong justification for capitalism. It delivers the goods and leaves individuals free to pursuit their own objectives' (Hausman and Mc Pherson, 2008: 23).

Based on the ideas described above, classical economics poses that if rational, self-interested individuals freely make exchanges in a perfectly competitive market, a general equilibrium exists. A general equilibrium is a situation where there is no excess demand on any market. This general equilibrium is what economists consider the goal of a perfectly functional market.

The classical economists who built the theories supporting this (Adam Smith, David Ricardo, John Stewart Mill, etc) did not say much about the specific content of what was being exchanged or produced in the market or about the choices being made by individuals. Their emphasis was on production and the factors that influence the supply of goods for consumption. They offered two main generalizations: (1) the assumption that at any given moment all reproducible goods could be produced in any quantity for the same cost per unit (except for temporary price fluctuations in times of crop failures or rapid changes in demand, prices should be determined by these constant costs of production), (2) the idea of diminishing returns: unless there is some technological innovation, as more and more



labour is devoted to a fixed amount of land, the amount that output increases when an additional labourer is employed will decline.

A fundamental principle of the classical theory is that the market economy is self-regulating (Polanyi, 1957). The market economy is considered as capable of achieving a 'natural' level of output which is when the resources of the economy are fully employed. This is measured by 'real GDP'<sup>11</sup>. Classical economists sustain that the market system contains self-adjustment mechanisms and work somehow to bring the economy back to the 'natural' level of real GDP when the economy's resources are not fully employed. The self-adjusting mechanisms that classical theory refers to is the flexibility of interest rates and other prices that ensure real GDP is always at its natural level. The flexibility of the interest rate is supposed to keep the money market in constant equilibrium (Hodgson, 2001). While there is much more to say about the assumptions underpinning classical theory, I will turn to the discussing the measure favoured by classical theory.

Classical theory gives GDP a very central role in economic modelling as a measure of a society's growth. As a measure of a country's growth, GDP goes back to the days of the Industrial Revolution and the history of national accounts.

In 1665, Thomas Petty made the first estimates of national accounts with the aim of estimating the taxation capacity of England. Later on, Adam Smith, considered the 'father' of modern economics, established the idea that the wealth of nations was not grounded in agriculture, gold and silver alone but in 'national production' thus including the manufacturers. Smith however did not provide many valuable insights into how to measure the wealth (or production) of a nation. But it was not until the 20th century that measuring production gained relevance in policy making.

In the 1940s, John Maynard Keynes and Sir Richard Stone co-authored 'The National Income and Expenditure of the United Kingdom, and How to Pay for the War'. This document formed the foundation of Sir Richard Stone's subsequent work, during peacetime, to develop the uniform accounting system subsequently adopted by the United

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<sup>11</sup> Real GDP is an inflation-adjusted measure that reflects the value of all goods and services produced in a given year (<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/realgdp.asp>)

Nations. The document offered the general theory that the total amount of income (or economic activity) in a country is heavily determined by a combination of three factors: consumption, investment, and government spending. Stone went on to define how each of these elements could be measured and specified the interactions between them. The uniform accounting system, not unlike that which corporations at the time used, was then developed to measure the national income of a country *at war*. The war was the priority. The well being of the population was a secondary consideration (Waring, 1988: 54). GDP, it was pointed out by various economists at the time, is a measure of economic activity and not of human wellbeing. They were concerned with the end use of the index and were aware that aggregate increases in national income were inadequate as indicators of economic growth because they said nothing about changes in the absolute extent of poverty. Despite this, today's United Nations System of National Accounts – the internationally recognised system for measuring and recording the economic activity of countries continues to use GDP (Waring, 1988).

### **1.2.3. Neoliberalism and the Rise of Development Economics**

The inaugural speech of President Truman in January 1949 is often referred to as the turning point for a 'new era' of development. His 'four point speech' propitiated the subsequent creation of a range of disciplines, international organisms and policies (including aid) to implement a new development enterprise. In the fourth point of his speech Truman called for the launch of a 'bold new program for making the benefits of the US's scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas in the world' (Baylis and Smith, 2001). He named the conditions of life of half of the world's people as approaching misery, their food as inadequate and their economic life as primitive and stagnant. Their poverty, he said, was a threat to themselves and to more prosperous areas. He presented the US and the more prosperous nations as 'preeminent amongst nations in development of industrial and scientific techniques', words that presented a juxtaposition to the 'underdeveloped, primitive and inadequate' countries to whom he proposed to extend the benefit of their knowledge and resources (Baylis and Smith, 2001). In his speech, Truman distinguished a geopolitical redefinition of the world, which was to be described in three main categories:

- First World: of capitalist, democratic economies
- Second World: mainly referring to socialist countries



- Third World: referring to old colonies and the rest of the world (the territories where the cold war became grounded on)

With the speech, the idea of development as universal goodness was being set. The regions where the development project was to be implemented were also described by Truman. The speech laid the foundations on both the policy terrain and the theoretical frameworks within which development was to be conceived as well as debated (Rai, 2011). The momentum granted by Truman's speech provided the ideal purpose and places in which to embark on the expansion of capitalism marking the start of the Cold War.

The emergence of different development theories followed (linear stages of growth model, structural change, dependency theory, etc). These theories came to be part of the general category of development economics, a branch of economic analysis that established itself as a response to the perceived inability of classical, neo-classical, and Marxist economics to address the little known economic reality that 'plagued' the poor countries of the world (Escobar, 1995).

In general, in economics as an academic discipline, the idea had become established that its principles must be universal in scope: they must apply to all types of economic systems and to all historical periods (Hodgson, 2001). Economics at the time was under pressure to prove itself as a science so economists were keen to emulate physics and other allegedly universal 'hard sciences' (Mirowski, 1989). Developments in mathematics were also important for this. The development of integral calculus and the ascension of the field theory concept encouraged and enabled the search for universals.<sup>12</sup> Although these ideas had already entered economics back in the 1870s their formalisation and institutionalisation accelerated after the Second World War eventually transforming the whole subject (Hodgson, 2001).

As the claims of universality for mainstream economics became ever more forceful, pressure was imposed on any sub discipline in which some elements of institutional and cultural specificity had been retained. Post war economic history dwindled in

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<sup>12</sup> Milton Friedman was attributed to have produced the type of calculations that economics needed at the time. His rhetoric for his quantity theory of money was the assertion of the existence of a stable relationship between the stock of money and prices (Hodgson, 2001) thus providing the type of mathematical / scientific proof for economics recognised as a science. More on Klein, 2008.

independence and stature to the point where it felt necessary to prove its virility by adopting mainstream econometric techniques. Similarly, development economics had emphasized the importance of cultural and institutional differences, until it too was taken over by the proselytizers of the 'rational peasant' as a manifestation of universal 'rational economic man'. The universalizing thrust had become so powerful that it has affected not only every branch of economics but sociology and politics as well. (Hodgson, 2001: 233)

Development economics, as a sub discipline, did not escape these pressures. As the market economy and consumption took a primary role in economic management, policy makers no longer saw 'the people' as workers, farmers and business people, etc. but simply as consumers (Polanyi, 1957). According to Escobar (1995), before the war economists had been rarely quoted or consulted in policy making. It was not until after World War II, that they became the 'ultimate authority for policy' (Escobar, 1995).

In his book *Encountering Development: the Making and Unmaking of the Third World* Colombian anthropologist Arturo Escobar describes how the decade between 1948 and 1958 saw the rise and consolidation of development economics, a field seeking to study the economics of developing countries. According to Escobar, the lack of economic theories specific to the so called developing world gave way to a proliferation of theories in the 1950s. Escobar cites John Kenneth Galbraith who captured very well what he terms a remarkable character in the transformation of the field of economics. He says that in 1949 when Galbraith began instruction 'in the economics of poverty and economic development', he was confronted with the fact that:

... as a different field of study, the special economics of poor countries was held not to exist. In the next fifteen years in the United States these attitudes were decidedly reversed... over a somewhat longer period, the Ford Foundation contributed well over a billion dollars between 1950s and 1975, and the Rockefeller, Carnegie and some CIA-supported foundations added smaller amounts... Intellectual interest in the problem of mass poverty had also greatly expanded. Seminars and courses on economic development had proliferated in universities and colleges across the land... No economic subject more quickly captured the attention of so many as the rescue of the poor countries from their poverty... To be involved with the poor countries provided the scholars with a foothold in the field of study that would assuredly expand and endure. (Escobar, 1995: 57)

Development economics, he describes, emerged as a practice concerned with certain questions, performed by particular individuals, and entrusted with particular social tasks.



During those years, development economics constructed the underdeveloped economy as its object (Escobar, 1995: 57). According to Escobar, the construction of the 'different' in terms of lacking and policies driven to 'fill' whole countries with a discourse that sought to 'make them like us' followed. This construction took place by following 'the same politics and processes that have made 'us' who 'we' are as a distinct economic culture (with accumulation and the pursuit of economic growth as goal)' (Escobar, 1995: 58). This interpretation of reality ignored the fundamental questions of why those countries were 'different', what made them so and failed to understand the pre-existing history and the complex web of relationships and dynamics that shape the many of those societies (Escobar, 1995). The gender biases of mainstream economics, which will be discussed in the next section, were transferred too as the field of development economics continued to be dominated by men and men's interests.

The discourse of development economics promised affluence for the Third World through active interventions in the economy in the 1950s and 1960s, planning throughout the development era, stabilization and adjustment policies in the 1980s and anti-interventionist 'market friendly' development for the 1990s (Escobar, 1995). But the development aid enterprise 'created a new sub-set of international affairs, casting developed and developing countries respectively as 'donors' and 'recipients'. 'This relationship in which the donors are in the driving seat, no matter how much this is glossed over with words such as 'partnership', has created and helped perpetuate an axis of superiority and inferiority', the power dynamics of which continue to this day' (Patrick Bond quoted in McLachlan, Carr and McAuliffe, 2010).

### **1.3. Neoliberalism and Aid Policy**

Many of the neoliberal policies characterising much economic policy (including aid) derive from the ten policy instruments outlined in the first version of the Washington Consensus. These were thought by their creator, John Williamson, to enjoy the consensus of the Washington based institutions: the political Washington of Congress and senior members of the administration, and the technocratic Washington of the international financial institutions, the economic agencies of the US government, the Federal Reserve Board and the think tanks, and hence the name Washington Consensus (Williamson, 1990). The ten areas into which the Washington Consensus is organised comprise:

1. Fiscal Deficits
2. Public expenditure priorities
3. Tax reform
4. Interest rates
5. The exchange rate
6. Trade Policy
7. Foreign direct investment
8. Privatisation
9. Deregulation
10. Property Rights

The reforms suggested for each of these areas were originally developed to deal with the debt crisis of Latin America and, according to the author, were never meant as a 'one size fits all' approach. However, they were taken by the International Financial Institutions to be a good set of policy prescriptions and were applied to many developing countries with little regard to their particular context and specific needs.

The specific policy areas into which the Washington Consensus reforms are typically grouped in are:

1. **Trade liberalisation** – is about opening up markets to the free flow of goods and services (Stiglitz, 2006). Trade liberalization is attained by a significant reduction or removal of trade barriers that restrict a country's international trade. These trade barriers include tariffs, non-tariff barriers (such as quotas and other government-imposed regulations), subsidies (such as those on production and exports), and other restrictive trade instruments. In general, liberalization of trade entails a greater integration with global markets. Trade liberalization is expected to increase a country's welfare through efficiency gains from specialization, exchange, higher competition and access to a larger availability of intermediate and final goods (Encyclopaedia of Global Business in Today's World, 2008)
2. **Financial liberalization** – refers to the reduction of any sort of regulations of the financial industry of a given country. The term financial liberalization is used to cover a whole set of measures, such as the autonomy of the Central Bank from the government; the complete freedom of finance to move into and out of the economy, which implies the full convertibility of the currency (exchange rate); the abandonment of all 'priority sector' lending targets; an end to government-imposed differential interest rate schemes; a



freeing of interest rates; the complete freedom of banks to pursue profits unhindered by government directives; the removal of restrictions on the ownership of banks, which means de-nationalization, full freedom for foreign ownership, and an end to 'voting caps'; and so on. These measures are not necessarily presented as a package, and not always in their maximal form (Patnaik, 2011).

**3. Fiscal constraints and public sector reforms** – refer to the reduction of the size of the state apparatus, reorganising public expenditure priorities including through the privatisation of social services and state owned enterprises.

**4. Informalisation of labour force** – Informal employment is characterised by lower job security, lower incomes, little or no access to social benefits and fewer opportunities to participate in education and training than formal employment (Braunstein, 2012). For corporations, it means having the 'flexibility' to absorb and release labour depending on the needs of the market (Taguiwalo, 2005).

While the degree of deregulation enacted by nation states has varied, the tendency to 'free' markets from intervention of the government has become an integral part of policies in both high and low income countries. Numerous governments have played an active role in globalising national economies and their countries' social, political and cultural life. The construction of global markets has taken place mainly (and ironically) through the intervention of governments, the international institutions, such as free trade regional areas and common markets, the expansion of multinational corporations, international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as via the influence of powerful governments and other actors, such as private banks (Benería, 2003b:119).

By now, after multiple financial crises in various countries (Asian Tigers, Argentina, Mexico and other Latin American countries) many mainstream economists and, to some extent, the international financial institutions themselves have recognised that the neoliberal policies prescribed by the Washington Consensus did not live up to their promises. For example, Stiglitz (2006) pointed that the Washington Consensus left behind issues of equity, employment, the pacing and sequencing of reforms, or how privatizations were to be conducted. He recalls:

There is by now also a consensus that it focused too much on just an increase in GDP, not on other things that affect living standards, and focused too little on sustainability – on whether growth could be sustained economically, or socially, politically or environmentally. The fact that countries like Argentina – which got an A+ rating from the IMF for following the Washington Consensus precepts—did well for a few short years only to later face calamity has helped to reinforce the new emphasis on sustainability. (Stiglitz, 2006: 17)

An 'augmented' Washington Consensus subsequently emerged, which includes the original list plus: corporate governance, anti-corruption, flexible labour markets, World Trade organization (WTO) agreements, financial codes and standards, 'prudent' capital account opening (long- before short-term), non-intermediate exchange rate regimes, independent central banks and inflation targeting, social safety nets and targeted poverty reduction (Braunstein, 2012). But the onset of the financial crisis of 2008 has only highlighted the problematic nature of liberalisation policies. As a result, civil society groups (labour and trade unions, women's groups, and many others) have increasingly become more vociferous in their opposition to liberalisation measures as they see important social services being cut in the process and what is described as the dismantling of the welfare state (Ferber and Nelson, 2003; WIDE, 2011).

Despite it all, liberalisation policies have continued to feature in economic policy including towards the developing world via aid policies. The rationale for liberalisation is provided in the official global processes of financing for development, and illustrated by the specific policies promoted by the international financial institutions and at government level, and by the particular types of aid programmes increasingly promoted with aid resources. Some examples are as follows.

### **1.3.1. Global Level (The Monterrey Consensus)**

The internationally agreed framework stipulating the parameters of financing for development is the Monterrey Consensus of 2002. The Monterrey Consensus emerged from the Financing for Development (FfD) process, which refers to a series of international UN conferences dealing with the issues of financing for development. The UN holds a FfD office the objective of which is to provide sustained follow up to the agreements and commitments contained in the Monterrey Consensus, as well as financing for



development-related aspects of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, including the development goals set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

The Monterrey Consensus is presented as a global response to confront the challenges of financing for development. It spells out a number of commitments agreed upon in the conference held in Mexico to deal with the financing issues faced by the world and most particularly by developing countries. The stated goal is 'to eradicate poverty, achieve sustained economic growth and promote sustainable development as we advance to a fully inclusive and equitable global economic system' (Monterrey Consensus, 2002: paragraph 1). For this, the text establishes a framework within which successful development is to be attained: one based on international trade as the 'engine for development' (Monterrey Consensus, 2002). Trade liberalisation, foreign direct investment and capital flows are described as key. To ensure that world trade supports development to the benefit of all countries, the members of the World Trade Organization are encouraged through the Monterrey Consensus to implement the outcome of its Fourth Ministerial Conference, held in Doha, Qatar in 2001 (paragraph 29). The Doha outcome document outlines, amongst other things, specific stipulations on how to conduct global trade. Its work programme stresses the importance of trade-related aspects of intellectual property, the relationship between trade and investment, the interactions between trade and competition policy, the importance of government procurement, trade and the environment, the relationship between trade, debt and finance, and technical cooperation and capacity building issues. In this manner, the Monterrey Consensus ensures countries sign up to the specifics of international trade endorsing very specific areas and methods characteristic of the neoliberal approach to development.

### **1.3.2. Aid for Trade**

Aid for Trade is a WTO initiative launched in 2005 at the Ministerial conference in Hong Kong. It is a very specific example of the neoliberal approach to aid as it embeds trade into aid itself. Aid for Trade is considered part of overall overseas development assistance (ODA) – grants and concessional loans – targeted at trade-related programmes and projects (WTO, 2013). Under the Aid for Trade initiative, countries provide aid to support developing

countries to increase exports of goods and services and to benefit from free trade and increased market access. Aid for Trade focuses on building the needed trade capacity and infrastructure of developing countries (including least developed countries) to benefit from trade opening. The Aid for Trade WTO programme of 2012-2013, for example, focuses on five key areas: resource mobilization, regional trade integration, private sector development, monitoring and evaluation of Aid for Trade and, crucially, mainstreaming of trade in development plans and programmes. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Working Party of the Trade Committee provide joint assistance to developing countries implementing the programme (OECD, nd).

### **1.3.3. Government Programme Level: Micro-credit**

A relatively new aspect of aid is its reinvigorated focus on supporting market-based projects and initiatives such as skills training for people to be able to produce items for trade in the market, and micro-credit schemes. Micro-credit schemes present an interesting case because they have been strongly linked to empowering many women economically and lifting many out of poverty. Designed to promote entrepreneurship and alleviate poverty, it is a division of micro-finance which focuses on the provision of financial services, especially savings accounts to the poor who lack steady employment, credit history or assets to be used as collateral. The underlying neoliberal philosophy behind microcredit has created a market driven system in which indicators of success are quantified in terms of repayment rates, loan recovery and timeliness, representing the bottom line for lenders (Visvanathan and Yoder, 2011). Critics of microcredit have argued that while the number of business has increased, it has led many borrowers into impossible debt traps and has not increased incomes after the repayment of interests. Further, some microcredit schemes that focus exclusively on women have been linked to increased violence against them as a result of tensions in the household around their newly acquired economic power. Male partners have been reported to have shifted the economic responsibilities exclusively on women while also taking control over their incomes (Batliwala and Pittman, 2010).

As an offspring of the Monterrey Consensus, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness emerged as the operational tool through which countries are to implement and manage



aid. The links between the Paris Declaration and liberalisation policies will be explored in more detail later in the thesis, first in the background chapter that follows and later through a case study. Now I turn to feminist scholarship to develop a critical analysis of neoliberalism and its core ideas and assumptions.

#### **1.4. Feminist Economics View of Mainstream Liberal Economics**

Women and men, it has been pointed, have historically been linked to the market in distinct ways, with consequences for their choices and behaviours. Many feminist economists (and social scientists, some mainstream economists, and philosophers) have long written about the market as a social and political construct (Mitchell, 2012; Ferber and Nelson, 2003; Hodgson, 2001; Benería, 1999, Polanyi, 1957).

Feminist economists and feminist political scientists have analysed and exposed the androcentric biases shaping the assumptions and behaviours valued in mainstream economic theory and especially in the market (Ferber and Nelson, 1993; 2003; Benería, 2003; England, 2003; Nelson, 2008). They have debunked some of the most basic assumptions in economic theory<sup>13</sup> arguing that they ‘flow from a separative model of human nature which presumes that humans are autonomous, impervious to social influences, and lack sufficient emotional connection to each other to make empathy possible’ (England, 1993: 37). Feminist scholars have termed the artificial persona upon which mainstream economics based its rationale as ‘rational economic man’ (Ferber and Nelson, 1993) alluding to the centrality of the concept of rationality underpinning mainstream economic theory.

In their analyses of mainstream economics, Riley (2009), Benería (2003), and Nelson (1993) (amongst others) have exposed that the core idea of an individual motivated solely by self-interest excludes behaviours motivated by love, compassion, altruism, duty, the pursuit of art and beauty, equality and reciprocity in relationships, and care. In neoliberalism, such behaviour is deemed to belong outside the market sector, such as in the private sphere of the family and is not taken into account. The idea that the unit of analysis for economic

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<sup>13</sup> Some of these basic assumptions are: that actors are selfish in the market, that interpersonal utility comparisons are impossible, and that tastes are exogenous to economic models and unchanging.

behaviour is the individual, neglects that individuals also group together to form collective organizations such as corporations, labour unions, governments and, most notably, families (Ferber and Nelson, 1993). Their decisions in the market are often made with the interest of the group in mind.

Another example of the feminists' analysis of core principles in mainstream economics is the critique of concept of utility (satisfaction of preferences) for being 'radically subjective and for lacking any dimension of objective, measurable welfare that might form the basis for interpersonal comparison' (England, 2003). The same concept of utility is found in both positive and normative economic theorising.<sup>14</sup> Paula England explains:

The tendency to eschew interpersonal utility comparisons is part of why positive neoclassical theories harmonize so well with conservative normative positions on distributional issues. The paradigm denies one the possibility of recognising that those at the bottom of hierarchies average less utility than others, which would provide a basis for questioning the justice of initial unequal distribution of endowments and its consequences. (England, 2003: 41)

Broadly, the classic (neoliberal) economic model focuses on the market economy with growth and accumulation as its primary goals (Mies, 1986; Tickner, 1992). In contrast, feminist political economists focus on society as an integrated whole, and analyze social relations as they relate to the economic system of production. They employ 'gender<sup>15</sup>' as a defining category and focus on the actual lived experience of women, men and families and what it means to be a human person (Riley, 2008). The feminist political economic approach 'reveals and clarifies how gender determines or influences the social and political relationships and structures of power and the differential economic effects that flow from these relationships and structures' (Riley, 2008: 1). In contrast to mainstream economics, this approach accounts for the gendered division of labour. The gender division of labour refers to the socially determined ideas and practices that define which roles and activities are deemed appropriate for men and women (Reeves and Baden, 2000). It is usually understood as divided between work in the public sphere of production and the private sphere of the household. The feminist political economic approach also identifies social

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<sup>14</sup> Positive economics refers to the relatively scientific (testable) economic science and focuses on 'value-free' descriptions of and predictions about economic relationships. Normative economics deals with values and addresses what should be rather than what is.

<sup>15</sup> Gender here refers to the socially constructed roles and expectations shaping the lives of men and women.



reproduction as an economic category as well as care work. Social reproduction is the work of nurturance of the human family and community. Care work creates human and social 'capital'. It creates the future workers with the skills, both human and social, to be good citizens. Care is a capability in itself – nurturing human relationships, altruism, reciprocity and trust. Without care, individuals do not flourish (Folbre, 2011). Focusing on the importance of the role of women in unpaid reproductive and care work, feminists place emphasis on the significance of this type of work for the functioning of the national economy (Folbre, 2011; Pyle, 2011; Riley, 2008; Razavi, 2007; Benería, 2003, Waring, 1988, 2004, Goldsmith-Clermont, 1990).

Some feminists however, are troubled by the concept of care work and its derivative classification 'care economy' as it still fails to account for important reproductive unpaid work that does not fall into the 'care' categories, primarily performed by women and also neglected from definitions of what constitutes productive work (Waring, 2012). Marilyn Waring sustains:

Certainly, unpaid care work is the key omission in the system of national accounts framework – the specific exclusion – but the reality is that most subsistence production still is not counted, the millions of hours women in paid work do beyond their proscribed hours – especially those in provisioning work, are not counted. This term fails as a descriptor of the complex texture of all unpaid work by all. (Waring, 2012: 270)

As mentioned in the above section, classical theory gives GDP (Gross National Product) a very central role in economic analysis and modelling as a measure of a society's growth. GDP is a measure of economic activity and not of human wellbeing or development. While there is widespread recognition of this fact and of the myriad of issues and limitations of using this index (Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi, 2008; Costanza, Heart, Posner and Talberth, 2009; Ravindran, 2004; Soubbotina, 2000; Waring, 1988 and 1999) GDP continues to drive much economic decision making to this day.

From a feminist political economy perspective, some of the critical issues posed by GDP are<sup>16</sup>:

1. GDP fails to show if income is distributed, whether it is distributed equitably or how it is distributed amongst men and women.
2. GDP fails to account for reproductive work or care work, which is disproportionately done by women, until they have been converted into a commercial activity – this means that the needs of those engaged in these types of work will remain invisible or under-resourced.
3. GDP fails to recognise work done in the informal economy (underground).
4. GDP fails to account for pollution and environmental degradation as a negative. GNP/ GDP account for these as a plus (for example, when involving a clean-up operation which is considered a 'service').
5. GDP fails to distinguish the positive or negative quality of goods (equal importance is given to the production of medicines and cigarettes or chemical weapons).
6. GDP ignores the value of leisure, human freedom, equality and sustainability as an indication of human well-being.
7. GDP ignores the question of whether the world can sustain high rates of growth given the depletion of non-renewable resources and environmental damage.
8. GDP fails to reflect the value of natural resources until they enter the monetary economy (when they get destroyed through extraction and consumption).

The links between some of the negative aspects of GDP and poverty and gender inequality have been documented by many scholars over the years. Without delving into details, the example of environmental degradation and climate change (influenced by the increased production and use of 'negatives' for the environment and human wellbeing) is worth mentioning because it has been linked to increased poverty, displacement of peoples and increased labour for women (UNDP, 1995). This illustrates how indiscriminate this index is and how its growth also means the expansion and exacerbation of problem areas for gender equality, the eradication of poverty and sustainable development.

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<sup>16</sup> I wish to acknowledge the original version of the following list to the authorship of the Debt and Development Coalition Ireland. The list was initially published online and is no longer available electronically.



Marilyn Waring (1988) was the first feminist economist to expose the failures of GDP from a feminist perspective highlighting that the United Nations System of National Accounts (UNSNA) plays an important role in making women invisible through their standards stipulating women's reproductive and unpaid work is not counted in national accounts and GDP. This was recognised in the Human Development Report of 1995 which pointed that while the UNSNA system was never meant to measure wellbeing – only output, income and expenditures – the system should become more comprehensive and encompassing in how it defines economic activity (UNDP, 1995). The report echoes feminist concerns regarding the definition of 'productive work' highlighting that much of this work performed by women is left outside of GDP. By insisting on using the gender blind GDP as a measure, the UNSNA values only the work that enters the market (i.e. generates money) and thus, much of the work that transcends market value never reaches the planning tables of policy makers. The Human Development Report of 1995 goes on to state:

The idea should be resisted that, to be valued, human activity must always be assigned a market price. Many of the things that make life worth living carry no price. We do not advocate that all activities within a family or a community must be monetized to be given adequate recognition. Most of these activities have a value that extends far beyond any economic valuation. (UNDP, 1995:97)

The invisibility of women's reproductive work in GDP means that this work cannot be valued or taken into account adequately in planning processes. In addition, the links between the negative aspects of GDP and poverty and gender inequality will remain unrecognised and unaddressed in development or aid policy.

A final important parenthesis in relation to GDP in this segment needs to be made. It is significant to clarify the relationship and difference between GDP and the also known index GNP. Both indices are derived from the national accounts and can be estimated using the expenditures or income approach. GNP measures the production that generates income for a country's *residents* while GDP measures production that generates income in a nation's *economy* (regardless of whether the resources are owned by that country's residents or not). Thus, interests, profit, and other forms of transfer from income generated in a country's economy – benefiting non-residents – is part of GDP but not part of GNP (Waring, 1999: 57). The UNSNA no longer uses GNP in favour of GDP and this

transition took place in a rather swift and uncontroversial manner without much public attention.

This has major consequences in terms of assessment of growth rates (and the opportunities for multinational investment) and in terms of the assessment of basic human needs and the well being of the population (and the provision of aid). The shift to GDP gives priority to economic growth and investment and obscures the needs of a people. This distinction is crucial —even within a misguided system— in terms of the end use of the figures. (Waring, 1998: 58)

In the case of aid policy, at the structural level, developing countries are still classified by the International Financial Institutions as high income, middle income or low income according to their level of GDP (Todaro and Smith, 2009). Decisions about development aid grants and loans (when, how much and on what basis) are made on the basis of these classifications. Similarly, the move from GNP to GDP is problematic even within the standards of these faulty measures, as GDP concentrates on economic activity which may not necessarily be generated in the countries where growth is supposed to be taking place. This further blurs an already blurred/ incomplete picture.

The consequences of the gender biased economic assumptions discussed in the previous segments are great. In the broader context of development, classic economics' assumptions about human nature, economic behaviour in markets, and GDP shape a (neoliberal) model of development that, by ignoring the productive activities of half of humanity, is not based on reality (Ege, 2011) and which replicates and normalises gender inequalities. This incomplete model, with all its gender biases also shapes development economics and thus the way in which the needs of developing countries are conceptualised.

## **1.5. Feminists' views on Development**

### **1.5.1. Gender and development**

Gender and Development (GAD) theory has challenged the mainstream (neoliberal) economic development paradigm in that it names unequal power relations (rich versus poor; women versus men), as preventing equitable development and women's full participation. GAD calls for equitable, sustainable development, with both women and men



as decision makers. Empowering the disadvantaged, especially women, and transforming unequal relations is the goal. The GAD strategies to achieve this goal are: (1) to reconceptualise the development process, taking gender and global inequalities into account (2) to identify and address practical needs, as determined by women and men, to improve their condition and also identify and address strategic needs (Parpart, Connelly and Barriteau, 2000). Practical needs are the immediate needs identified by women to assist their survival (usually related to health care, food provision, access to safe water and sanitation, ensuring income earning opportunities). Strategic needs refer to those needs identified by women and which require strategies for challenging male dominance and privilege (Reeves and Baden, 2000; Moser 1989). A third strategy of GAD to achieve the goals of transforming unequal power relations, is to address strategic interests of the poor through people centred development.

For development and aid planning, this involves taking into consideration a range of factors such as: who has access to and control over land and resources (some women may have access to resources but no ownership or control over their use), and the gender division of labour and care work. The levels of participation of women in planning and decision making processes is also important. The formulation of more gender-aware policies requires women's (and men's) involvement as participants, beneficiaries, and agents. Women benefit significantly if their decision-making capacity and status are increased through a process of consultation. An awareness of women's movements should be part of a gender analysis as, in most countries, they have historically played an important role in securing women's rights (Parpart, Connelly and Barriteau, 2000).

GAD thus posits that in order to be successful, each development effort must be preceded and accompanied by a gender-aware analysis that takes into account the roles and needs of both males and females in the area where any given programme will operate (Østergaard, 1992). These differences must be taken into account across the board in all development policies and planning (Østergaard, 1992: xiii). To this effect, in the 1990s, gender mainstreaming was established as the mechanism for achieving gender equality. The Millennium Declaration and the MDGs subsequently provided a framework within which to address corresponding policy areas. So even at an official level there has been a recognition that aid policies can benefit from these tools and understanding to increase the

positive impact it can exercise. However, judging by the relatively recent developments in the international arena regarding the Financing for Development process, it is clear that a gender and development approach is missing. Instead, a peculiar understanding of poverty reduction and gender equality emerges in the internationally agreed frameworks such as the Monterrey Consensus and similarly at the policy level. Some examples are as follows.

### 1.5.2. The Monterrey Consensus

While the Monterrey Consensus as well as subsequent conferences and review gatherings under the Financing for Development process have noted the importance of gender and of addressing women's issues, a number of contradictions can be identified in the text from a gender and women's rights perspective.

The Monterrey Consensus establishes 'the essential role of a holistic approach to the interconnected national, international and systemic challenges of financing for development – sustainable, gender-sensitive, people-centred development – in all parts of the globe' (Monterrey Consensus, 2002, paragraph 8). It refers to upholding the Charter of the United Nations and building upon the values of the Millennium Declaration, to commit to promoting national and global economic systems based on the principles of justice, equity, democracy, participation, transparency, accountability and inclusion (Monterrey Consensus, 2002, paragraph 9). These statements are not compatible with a subsequent affirmation in paragraph 11 when in the context of good governance and as an essential part of sustainable development, it states '...respect for human rights, including the right to development, and the rule of law, gender equality, *market-oriented policies*, and an overall commitment to just and democratic societies are also essential and *mutually reinforcing*' (ibid, my emphasis).

The incoherence lies in the assumption that in taking a holistic approach to the challenges of Financing for Development, gender-sensitive and people-centred development it is possible to pursue market-oriented policies. They are not mutually reinforcing. Market-oriented policies in their current neoliberal form so far have not been known for having positive correlations with gender equality or the rule of law nor are they part of promoting



an economic system based on principles of justice, equity, democracy, etc, as cited above from paragraph 9 (WIDE, 2011; Visvanathan et al, 2011; Momsen, 2004).

The text goes on to commit 'to pursue appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks at the respective national levels and in a manner consistent with national laws to encourage public and private initiatives, including at the local level, and foster a dynamic and well functioning business sector, while improving income growth and distribution, raising productivity, empowering women and protecting labour rights and the environment' (Monterrey Consensus, 2002, paragraph 12, emphasis mine). In this case and when seen in the context of the remaining commitments, a tendency to define women's empowerment on the basis of their participation in the labour force can be seen. This reveals an 'efficiency approach' based on increasing number of workers in the current system which does not necessarily provide the labour protections it refers to.

**In Monterrey, women's organisations claimed that the agreed proposals presented clear incongruencies (de la Cruz, 2008: xix):**

1. Equality as a human right, participation and sustainable development are not coherent with protection of corporate rights to investment, trade and property.
2. The objectives of the UN conferences held in the 1990's are not coherent with macro-economic policies that increase poverty.
3. Rhetorical commitments on human rights are not coherent with structural adjustment policies, trade liberalisation and institutions of development finance that undermine security, civil, political, economic and cultural rights.
4. Democracy and participation are not coherent with the control exercised by organisations like the International Financial Institutions and the WTO which exclude numerous poor nations.
5. Gender Mainstreaming and follow up efforts with the commitments made in Beijing are not coherent with existing macroeconomic policies.
6. Sustainable human development is not coherent with the liberalisation policies of the World Trade Organisation.

7. Poverty eradication is not coherent with the mobilisation efforts towards the war on terror. This weakens the commitments towards ODA and orients resources towards militarisation making societies and economies unstable.

The points made by the women's delegations in Monterrey were largely ignored. None of the subsequent documents and process of FfD contained references to address those inconsistencies. The Paris Declaration of 2005, an offspring of the FfD process and the formal aid effectiveness agenda, has been heavily criticized on many fronts but especially for the absence of human rights language and gender considerations. This will be specifically explored in the next chapter.

### **1.5.3. Trade Liberalisation**

Trade liberalization, international capital flows, fiscal austerity and restrictive monetary policy can bring new opportunities to participants of stable economies in the traditional sense. But when the gender effects are considered in the analysis, neoliberal reforms do not show to promote well-being and entail additional shortcomings for women due to constraints they face in the household and in society (Berik and van der Meulen Rodgers, 2008). Restructuring as a result of (neoliberal) globalisation tends to reinforce and exacerbate existing gender inequalities (Visvanathan, 2011; Momsen, 2004). Trade liberalisation policies as conditions for aid are a typical example.<sup>17</sup> Greater trade openness can affect gender inequalities in many levels. Fontana (2009) succinctly explains how this takes place:

Inequalities in employment between women and men in a country may narrow, for example, if the sectors that expand as a result of trade liberalization have a higher percentage of female workers than the sectors that contract. In other countries, women may be negatively affected if they are disproportionately employed in sectors that are exposed to import competition, and, importantly, if their opportunities to find employment in other sectors are limited due to lack of assets, employers' prejudices and other market biases. Other gender-specific impacts relate to women's control over household spending, which may decrease or expand, depending on whether trade liberalization destroys or creates sources of independent income for women. The fiscal impact of trade liberalization and its gender-specific effects depend on the relative importance of tariff revenue in

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<sup>17</sup> To join the World Trade Organisation, countries are expected to commit to liberalisation policies.



government financing, the alternative taxes that the government may introduce to compensate for the loss, and the extent to which public expenditure to address disadvantages women face is a priority for the government. Whether the liberalization of imports benefit poor consumers, and in particular women in their role as principal home managers and family care providers, will depend on whether tariff cuts translate into cheaper consumer goods, and on whether the cheaper imported goods constitute an important share in low income households' consumption baskets. Employment, consumption and public provision effects may in turn have important consequences for the gender-specific distribution of unpaid work among household members, including children. (Fontana, 2009: 3)

Admittedly, trade liberalisation and globalisation overall have opened up more employment opportunities for women, which has helped close the gender gap in labour force participation rates (Seguino, in Braunstein, 2012). However it is reported that this increase has not necessarily translated into gender equality in pay and status, as women's entrance in the labour force has often been on unfavourable terms (UNRISD, 2012). This had already been recognised in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) when it states that:

... In many cases, employment creation strategies have not paid sufficient attention to occupations and sectors where women predominate; nor have they adequately promoted the access of women to those occupations and sectors that are traditionally male. (BPfA, 1995: 67, paragraph 160)

While many women and their families have benefited from entering the paid-work force it has been demonstrated that their burdens have also intensified (Visvanathan, 2011; Taguiwalo, 2005; Momsen 2004).

The following cases illustrate how this has taken place:

*Women in farming communities (Philippines)*

'Current neoliberal policies in agriculture have accelerated the restructuring of the agricultural sector. The export orientation of agriculture with the emphasis on high yielding varieties and export crops that require expensive and imported chemical fertilisers, pesticides and seeds has been a boon to agro chemical TNCs and landlords but a bane to farming communities and particularly to peasant women and women farm workers. Rural women work longer, suffer from ill health and constant anxiety in coping with heavier productive and domestic responsibilities' (Taguiwalo, 2005: 11).

'The entry of genetically modified seeds such as the Bt corn, aggressively marketed by the US based TNC (transnational corporation) Monsanto, has meant not only the loss of

traditional farming methods and traditional corn seeds but has been associated with the simultaneous appearance of ailments such as cough, vomiting, headache, diarrhoea, difficulty in breathing in more than 50 farmers in the Southern Philippines who lived in proximity to a farm planted to Bt corn' (Taguiwalo, 2005: 12).

*Women in fisheries (Thailand)*

'In fishing communities, globalization with its emphasis on export orientation has led to a decline in traditional fishing and contributed to environmental degradation as commercial fishing, aquaculture and fish processing plants take precedence in government support and incentives. This restructuring of the fishing industry translates into an increase in women's productive and reproductive burdens and in many cases aggravated women's invisibility and marginalization... Thai women workers in crab processing are employed either on a piece rate basis in local crab picking units or as home-based workers supplying to middlemen in processing units. Home-based work is done under poor working conditions and with low pay. Women workers are isolated, lack organisation and are deprived of benefits available to workers in the formal sector' (Taguiwalo, 2005: 9).

A new international division of labour has been identified (Momsen, 2004) which also means that most of the responsibility for caring work is done by women. According to the Human Development Report of 1999, while women's participation in the labour market is increasing, they continue to carry the burden of care, spending more hours in unpaid care work. 'In Bangladesh, women in the garment industry spend 56 hours a week in paid employment on top of 31 hours in unpaid care work – a total of 87 hours compared with 67 by men' (UNDP, 1999). Given the growing trend of the withdrawal of the State from its functions of providing social protection and much needed essential services, a direct result of fiscal constraints and public sector reforms (including privatization), the costs of healthcare and education are increasingly passed on to families and as care givers and mothers, women take on a much greater burden (Sharma in Taguiwalo, 2005; WIDE, 2011; Peterson and Runyan, 2014)).

#### **1.5.4. Financial liberalisation**

Braunstein's analysis (in Zammit, Berik and van der Meulen Rodgers, 2008) on the associations between foreign direct investment (FDI) and gender equality indicate that the



proportion of women workers in the labour-intensive, export-oriented manufacturing sector is relatively high in countries that receive high inflows of FDI. But when technologies are upgraded and restructuring takes place, women experience disproportionate job losses. Financial liberalisation has also been linked to the suspension of labour rights as a condition for attracting FDI, as is the case of Malaysia. Additionally, an increase in FDI flows are linked to short-term gains in women's absolute wage levels, but the long term trajectory for women's relative wages is more ambiguous. Braunstein (2008) argues that to make growth compatible with gender equity, FDI needs to be managed through multilateral agreements and domestic regulations so that investments can be made in social policies that bolster the productive capacities of women and girls and in improvements to the social supports available to working families when women enter the labour market.

As is the case of trade liberalization, international flows of financial capital, financial liberalization and foreign direct investment (FDI) can potentially help both men and women through a number of channels, including greater access to capital and new job opportunities in factories operated by multinational firms. However, the evidence indicates that women's unpaid workloads and caring responsibilities, and their relative lack of bargaining power associated with the jobs and industries in which they are concentrated, can lead women to bear a disproportionate share of the burdens associated with increased international mobility of capital (Berik and van der Meulen Rodgers, 2008: 30).

In sum, the record of the links between liberalisation policies, gender equality and poverty reduction is mixed. Some groups of women seem to have benefited in terms of employment, mostly in countries that export labour-intensive goods or where non-traditional agriculture is expanding. But the vulnerability of workers has also increased and most of the jobs created for women by trade liberalization do not appear to provide long-term employment opportunities (Fontana, 2009). The evidence suggests that the long-term goal of transforming gender inequalities remains unmet and appears unattainable without regulation of capital, and a reorientation and expansion of the state's role in funding public goods and providing a social safety net (Seguino and Grown, 2006).

## 1.6. Feminist Critique of Neoliberal Aid Policy Approach and Aid Effectiveness

Liberalisation policies are not new in development and aid policy. Liberalisation policies had long been dictated to developing countries and imposed by the International Financial Institutions in the 1980s through aid conditionality and Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs)<sup>18</sup> in a top down approach which has exacerbated existing imbalances of power between North and South. SAPs have been imposed to ensure debt repayment and economic restructuring. But the way this structural adjustment has happened required poor countries to reduce spending on things like health, education and development, while debt repayment and other economic policies have been made the priority (Shah, 2010). In the case of Africa, aid conditionality and SAPs resulted in the selling of valuable state assets to foreign firms at very low prices, massive deindustrialisation and increased unemployment for both men and women. The neoliberal policies here were seen as a kind of recolonization as the policies were mainly in the service of developed countries' capital, a very different situation than the neoliberal version seen in Europe and North America (Ferguson, 2009).

Feminist scholars have pointed to the gendered assumptions underlying SAPs which construct women as being previously unproductive. SAPs, it has been strongly argued, have been gender blind in that they have assumed the endless flexibility of women's time, energy and availability to enter the labour force when the market needs them and especially in times of economic crisis in addition to their reproductive work (Elson, 1995). SAPs have not been historically accompanied by gender analyses so no consideration has been given to the gender division of labour or the strategic and practical needs of women (Rai, 2002). While there is evidence that there are now expectations to engender SAPs as part of recent efforts to make aid more effective, progress has been slow and scattered.

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<sup>18</sup> Recalling the history of conditionality from 1980s, Riddell (2008) points to: 'According to the World Bank's own figures, in the early 1980s, on average, the Bank applied 5 conditions to their loans and used the same number of benchmarks against which to assess performance. By the end of the decade, the number of conditions had risen to over 30; they peaked at 45 by 1993 and by 1999 still numbered about 25. The average number of benchmarks trebled in the 1980s and averaged well over ten for the decade of the 1990s. It was not only that the number of conditions arose, but the nature and degree of conditionality also tightened in the 1990s. By the mid 1990s, almost 120 countries had some form of adjustment programme' (Riddell, 2008: 236)



The main objective of aid is supposed to be the promotion of economic development and welfare (OECD, 2008). Poverty reduction has been and continues to be a central aspect of economic development and aid's purpose (Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005). Gender equality, as a right and a goal in and of itself, and poverty reduction are intimately linked and often treated as one and the same. From this point of view, aid policies are there to serve the overarching goals of both.

However, a number of feminists have long raised the possibility that the feminisation of poverty is a direct result of women's inclusion in the development process (Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies, Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, Claudia von Werlhof, Diane Elson, Ruth Pearson, Bina Agarwal and DAWN). Their concern with this possibility makes visible why it is problematic to assume that the main purpose of aid is to stimulate growth, as measured by GDP. On this matter Braunstein (2012) asked: is growth good for women? In addressing this question she pointed out that 'while growth has had positive impacts on the lives of women and gender equality, there are still problems with the structure of this logic in the context of the neoliberal macro-economic policy environment' (Braunstein, 2012:12).

An 'efficiency based approach' to gender equality can be seen as being promoted through liberalisation as it emphasises economic growth through expanding markets. As has been pointed out by Seguíno no one could argue that increasing the number of workers will result in larger productivity and growth (as measured by GDP) (Braunstein, 2012). Looking at economic growth from a feminist economics perspective, Seguíno has further argued that gender-based wage gaps actually contributed to growth among semi-industrialized countries because of their role in determining export competitiveness. She points out that it is the type of inequality which matters for growth. 'When gender discrimination is manifested in ways that do not compromise the overall quality of the labour force but merely lower the cost of labour for employers, systematically discriminating against women can have positive effects on growth' (Seguíno quoted in Braunstein, 2013: 105). So, aid policies that promote liberalisation without gender planning in mind result in the type of efficiency that focuses on growth and not on gender equality. 'Within the parameters of a gender blind model this can be a very 'effective' way of maintaining (and reproducing) gender inequality' (Braunstein 2013). Aid effectiveness seen in these terms, it can be said, is already taking place.

The need for a gender-sensitive measure to track the effectiveness of aid becomes clear. If aid is to be effective in the sense of balancing economic development and achieving human development goals, gender considerations are essential and corresponding indicators need to be consistently used to guide aid policy. Human development goals here refer to the Millennium Development Goals framework loosely linked to Amartya Sen's multidimensional approach to human development.

Against this backdrop, how exactly is it that aid can be effective if it continues to serve a gender biased economic model that has largely been proven to have adverse effects on women and so called 'minorities'? Can the negative effects of the neoliberal economic system be countered by 'gendering aid' within the neoliberal paradigm? I argue that the answer to those questions is a resounding no, if aid is to serve its purpose of poverty reduction and gender equality with human rights of men and women at the centre.

Kilby and Olivieri (2008) partly addressed the first question when they wrote about the effectiveness of aid in the context of the Australian aid policy. Their enquiry focused on the extent to which gender policy fits into or is driven by the neoliberal paradigm underpinning the aid program. They also interrogated the extent to which gender policy can challenge the neoliberal paradigm, by positing a rights agenda, or whether this is merely a more elaborate version of 'add women and stir'. 'Add women and stir' refers to adding women to existing conceptual frameworks and policies without making any significant changes to the cultural and structural parts of the system that sustain gender biases (Harding, 1995). Kilby and Olivieri go on to contend that, in the Australian case, it is possible to 'sit between the two' as Australian gender policy focuses on the economic role that women can play in fostering growth on the one hand, and the denial of human rights that marginalisation and disempowerment represents. They concluded that in line with the World Bank and other gender policies in the 2000s, Australian Aid gender policy is influenced by a neoliberal approach more than a human rights approach and that this does not represent much in the way of progress since the 1980s. They point that the real issue of human rights for both men and women seem to have disappeared completely and that the main problem of the neoliberal approach to gender and development is a focus on women's ability to increase their productivity in order to develop aid effectiveness. 'The end goal is serving the ends of



the economy and the development institutions not the concerns and problems of women (and men, girls and boys) in developing countries' (Kilby and Olivieri, 2008: 329). Their conclusions resonate with a major argument of this thesis: that aid effectiveness without gender equality and human development goals in mind is not possible.

### **1.7. Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to demonstrate that the neoliberal economic paradigm is gender blind and underpins the financing for development framework guiding aid policies. By requiring and promoting market-oriented liberalisation policies in a manner that emphasizes economic over human development and short-term gain rather than long term, the international system uses aid to reproduce the gender inequalities embedded in the neoliberal efficiency-based economic approach to development. In this way, aid policies rooted in/ dependent on the pursuit of liberalisation approaches undermine the very goals that aid is supposed to help achieve (i.e. MDGs) creating a vicious cycle of poverty and inequality with serious consequences for sustainable development. The chapter has also sought to revive the long known arguments over the centrality of gender biases contained in GDP as the principal indicator of development today. By insisting on the use of the gender blind GDP to measure and analyse a country's development and to make significant judgements on aid policy, many women's work and women themselves (as well as other 'feminised' groups, including males, such as indigenous, Afro-descendants, people with disabilities, etc) continue to go undervalued and missing from development aid planning.

'Incorporating gender in economic thinking is not enough. Manifold discriminations impinge on women's everyday existence. Class, racial, patriarchal and heterosexist discrimination collaborate under the common banner of profit maximisation at the lowest cost possible and regardless of its human consequences' (WIDE, 2011). Persistent gender inequality is a human rights violation. Aid should only be deemed effective when its measures can reflect gender and human development values beyond the market system. For this, the way in which we measure what is valuable and what constitutes effectiveness needs to be reconceptualised.

Before moving on to explore the issue of measurement and indicators (chapter 3), the next chapter will provide necessary background on the latest international consensus on aid effectiveness – the Paris Declaration. The chapter also includes an introduction to the indicators being used to measure aid effectiveness and demonstrates that the Paris Declaration is not gender-sensitive.



## Chapter 2. Background to the Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness and Feminist Analysis

*'Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.'*

Beijing Platform of Action, 1995: paragraph 202

### 2.1. Introduction

New trends in terms of the establishment of what is termed a 'new aid architecture'<sup>19</sup> shaped by new relations between aid donors and countries receiving development aid demonstrate that significant shifts in the financial and development cooperation structures are taking place since the start of the new millennium. The drive to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 has increased the pace of work towards the way in which aid is delivered and managed. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness signed in 2005 with targets set to be achieved by 2010 is a reflection of this reality. In this context efforts are currently being made from many quarters to address and promote the goals of poverty reduction.

Gender equality and women's human rights have become prominent aspects of poverty reduction strategies especially since the Fourth UN Conference on Women in 1995, where it was asserted that 70% of the world's poor were women. The term 'feminization of poverty' has drawn attention to the disproportionate number of women living in poverty. To some extent, it has been argued, this has triggered a process of 'engendering' poverty reduction strategies even if still in limited ways. Similarly, the term has prompted many to take a broader, multidimensional view of poverty being not just about income but also about 'inputs' (of time and labour) highlighting both women's share and level of poverty as much as their burden of dealing with it (Chant, 2011). While the veracity of this 'feminisation of poverty' thesis has been put into question the fact remains that there is an increased drive to target gender equality in poverty reduction programmes and strategies.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> This term is used to refer to the institutions and systems that govern the delivery and management of aid.

<sup>20</sup> See Chant (2006) for a different perspective on the issue with the feminisation of poverty thesis.

According to Chant (2011) gender equality and poverty reduction have sometimes been approached as one and the same. This, she notes, has proven to be problematic for advocates of both gender equality and of poverty reduction as two distinct goals seem to motivate gender and poverty reduction advocates. From a human rights perspective, gender equality is considered a goal in itself. Poverty reduction, from this view, should reflect the inalienability of the right to be free from poverty (Social Watch, 2006). For others, especially for economists, administrators and technocrats working for governments and International Financial Institutions (IFI), gender equality is considered as a means to achieve the goal of poverty reduction. Poverty reduction, for this camp, is understood in economic terms, which usually implies bringing in more women to the labour force to contribute to economic growth while 'being empowered' in the process (Chant, 2011; Easterly, 2009).

These distinct and often conflicting interpretations of poverty reduction and gender equality have made their way into the broader aid effectiveness agenda, raising the more fundamental issue of what constitutes aid effectiveness and how it is best measured. For the gender and human rights stakeholders effectiveness should be measured by the extent to which aid is achieving development goals and involves using gender-sensitive approaches to measuring results. For economists, administrators and technocrats (and related collaborators), effectiveness is about establishing efficient systems of aid management assuming these will produce more effective aid results. As a product of these two competing and most times contradictory views, a number of tensions have taken shape in the processes following the signing of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005. In particular, the section on indicators to measure the effectiveness of aid has proven most controversial as they reveal a technocratic, gender-blind approach to measuring results incongruent with measuring development outcomes.

The discussion that follows in this background chapter is meant to provide important background information to the overall thesis. It offers an overview of the aid effectiveness process and provides a feminist analysis of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The analysis points at how a technocratic, gender blind view of aid efficiency reflected in the Paris Declaration, underpinned by neoliberal assumptions and indicators, neglects the issue of aid effectiveness itself.



The first segment on context looks at some of the main antecedents to the Paris Declaration, including the Financing for Development conference held in Monterrey in 2002. These events established important pillars and assumptions (an economic framework in particular) that became operational in the Paris Declaration. The second segment describes the main features of the Paris Declaration document including a brief overview of the process that led to its creation, which are the main actors and what official review processes have revealed. The third section is dedicated to expose what was achieved by the set target time of 2010, including commentary on the outcomes of the most recent High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Busan on December 2011. This is meant to provide an update to this point on the status of the aid effectiveness official process. The segment that follows uses a feminist analysis to expose critical areas that have been neglected in the Paris Declaration and looks at trends to sideline gender equality and human rights approaches despite attempts by gender and human rights advocates to stress their importance to the goal of aid effectiveness. A marked preference for technical approaches to aid effectiveness (interpreted as aid efficiency) congruent with the current neoliberal economic agenda is exposed by the analysis and how this approach fails to measure aid effectiveness in a manner that is sensitive to gender equality and human rights goals. The chapter concludes by connecting this material to the subsequent and more focused discussion on measuring aid effectiveness and the use of gender-sensitive indicators.

## **2.2. Context**

The development cooperation landscape, foreign aid in particular, has been undergoing massive changes during the last 12 years. This landscape is marked by the realisation by both donors and recipient countries that aid has been too fragmented in the past with many different approaches to aid delivery. Requirements varying from donor to donor have placed enormous bureaucratic burdens in recipient countries. As a result, aid has become less effective further exacerbating the power dynamics that have historically prevented recipient countries from acting on their own development plans based on their priorities. Moreover, global funds, private philanthropic organisations, private companies, and governments such as those of China, India, Brazil and Venezuela are now playing a stronger

role in development cooperation, including in providing aid (Brown and Morton, 2008). As donors become more diverse, many operating outside formal aid structures, new challenges arise (for aid recipient countries in particular) to coordinate and manage aid resources. If aid is to be truly effective, a change in paradigm was due to take place where foreign aid can be harmonised around the needs of aid recipient countries, and where relationships with donors can be more collaborative and not one-way dictated from the top. As such, the emergence of the new 'aid architecture' which includes new development actors and new approaches to planning and delivering aid money was timely.

Back in 2002, the Financing for Development conference was held in Monterrey, Mexico to deal with the challenges of financing for development around the world, especially in developing countries. The conference was following from the momentum established by the Millennium Declaration of 2000, the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and a series of international gatherings on human rights that took place in the 1990s: the Earth Summit, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights, and the Platform for Action of the Conference on Population and Development, amongst others. Through the Monterrey Consensus countries agreed to increase aid volumes – recalling unfulfilled commitments already made in 1970 – and to focus on making aid more effective to achieve the MDGs.

The Monterrey Consensus noted the dramatic shortfalls in the resources required to achieve internationally agreed development goals were taking place (Monterrey Consensus, 2002: paragraph 2). These shortfalls were largely the result of neoliberal approaches to managing the economy pursued by some of the lead economies, namely the US and Britain, initiated in the 1970s but pursued more strongly in the 1980s. These neoliberal approaches called for downsizing the public sector, cutting private sector regulations and reducing direct taxes in order to stimulate the expansion of the private sector. At the time, official aid agencies had followed suit with the World Bank persuading other donors to take this approach to development aid-giving. The idea was that too much government influence over the economy was detrimental so the best way forward would be to reduce government role and influence – also in aid recipient countries – by reducing the aid funds which sustained it. In turn, aid was given upon condition that recipient countries pursue the neoliberal policies that were being implemented in the industrialised



world (Riddell, 2007; Elson, 2008). In addition, growing concerns about too much aid being detrimental to development by encouraging continual dependency on aid as a source of finance discouraged donors. The results were: the dramatic fall of overseas development assistance (ODA) over the course of the years as all bilateral donors cut their aid budgets, and the emergence of complex conditions attached to aid giving which were accompanied by Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) for recipient countries to transform their economies. These SAPs are now recognised to have undermined countries' social and economic development and imposed hardships in the most vulnerable groups, especially on women (Peterson, 2014; Visvanathan, 2008: 4, Riddell, 2007: 34; Antrobus, 2004; Rai, 2002).

As it was established in the previous chapter, the conference in Monterrey provided a medium to establish agreements over the mobilisation of the necessary resources to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as part of a broader agenda 'to eradicate poverty, achieve sustained economic growth and promote sustainable development' (paragraphs 1, 2 and 3). This rhetoric was a welcome change from a previous focus on development as growth alone to one where the eradication of poverty and promoting sustainable development, backed by the MDGs, was at centre stage. But the Monterrey Consensus is grounded on the idea that international trade and private capital – particularly foreign investment – constitute the main 'engines' of finance for development. It justifies the existence of aid on the basis of the presence of market failures and not on the intrinsic human right to development or equality objectives or objectives of social cohesion (Sanahuja, 2007). As such, the Monterrey Consensus, even when assuming the social agenda represented by the MDGs, did not distance itself too much from the liberal precepts that have ruled development finance since 1945, or from the more recent Washington Consensus (Sanahuja, 2007: 80-81).

After the Monterrey conference, the drive towards the achievement of the MDGs provided increased motivation to accelerate the pace of progress to reduce global poverty. The Rome conference on Harmonisation (2003) and the second roundtable for Managing for Development Results in Marrakech (2004) provided the basis of what was to become the final text of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness signed in 2005. In Paris, donor countries pledged their commitment to augment the volumes of aid (although no specific

70

figures were agreed), manage it more effectively and establish adequate systems to realise this.

### 2.3. What is the Paris Declaration?

The Paris Declaration is a non-binding declaration which aims at taking ‘far-reaching and monitorable actions to reform the way we deliver and manage aid’ (Paris Declaration, 2005). To guide these actions, the declaration outlines a series of principles, commitments and indicators of progress with targets to reach by 2010. The section on indicators describes how the principles can be measured nationally and monitored internationally.<sup>21</sup>

They are:

Principle	Indicator of Progress
1. <b>Ownership</b> – Partner countries exercising leadership over their development policies, strategies and co-ordinating related actions	<p><b>1. Partners have operational development strategies</b> — Number of countries with national development strategies (including PRSs) that have clear strategic priorities linked to a medium-term expenditure framework and reflected in annual budgets.</p>
2. <b>Alignment</b> – Donors basing their overall support on partner countries’ national development strategies, institutions and procedures	<p><b>2. Reliable country systems</b> — Number of partner countries that have procurement and public financial management systems that either (a) adhere to broadly accepted good practices or (b) have a reform programme in place to achieve these.</p> <p><b>3. Aid flows are aligned on national priorities</b> — Percent of aid flows to the government sector that is reported on partners’ national budgets.</p> <p><b>4. Strengthen capacity by co-ordinated support</b> — Percent of donor capacity-development support provided through co-ordinated programmes consistent with partners’ national development strategies.</p> <p><b>5a. Use of country procurement systems</b> — Percent of</p>

<sup>21</sup> The section on targets for 2010 is not reflected in this table but is available in annex one with a full version of the Paris Declaration.



Principle	Indicator of Progress
	<p>donors and of aid flows that use partner country procurement systems which either (a) adhere to broadly accepted good practices or (b) have a reform programme in place to achieve these.</p> <p><b>5b. Use of country public financial systems</b> – Percent of donors and aid flows that use public financial management systems in partner countries, which either a) adhere to broadly accepted good practices or b) have a reform programme in place to achieve these.</p> <p><b>6. Strengthen capacity by avoiding parallel implementation structures</b> — Number of parallel implementation project implementation units (PIUs) per country.</p> <p><b>7. Aid is more predictable</b> — Percent of aid disbursements released according to agreed schedules in annual or multi-year frameworks.</p> <p><b>8. Aid is untied</b> — Percent of bilateral aid that is untied.</p>
<p><b>3. Harmonisation</b> – Donors’ actions being harmonised, transparent and collectively effective</p>	<p><b>9. Use of common arrangements or procedures</b> — Percent of aid provided as programme-based approaches</p> <p><b>10. Encourage shared analysis</b> — Percent of (a) field missions and/or (b) country analytic work, including diagnostic reviews that are joint.</p>
<p><b>4. Managing for Results</b> – managing resources and improving decision-making</p>	<p><b>11. Results-oriented frameworks</b> — Number of countries with transparent and monitorable performance assessment frameworks to assess progress against (a) the national development strategies and (b) sector programmes.</p>
<p><b>5. Mutual Accountability</b> – donors and partners sharing accountability for development results</p>	<p><b>12. Mutual accountability</b> — Number of partner countries that undertake mutual assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments on aid effectiveness including those in this Declaration.</p>

The process for this landmark agreement was convened by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and its Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC). It has been signed by approximately 118 countries and territories and by 27 international organisations.

The Paris Declaration is the result of an international process that began with the Millennium Declaration but was shaped more concretely through the conferences in Monterrey and Rome. These conferences served as platforms for discussions to find alternatives to the failures of the Structural Adjustment Programmes in the 1980s and 1990s and weak performance of aid flows. Each of these events produced statements reaffirming commitments to ‘the goal of eradicating poverty, achieving sustained economic growth and promoting sustainable development as we advance to an inclusive and equitable economic system’(Monterrey Consensus, 2002; Rome Declaration on Harmonisation, 2003). They also produced a number of mechanisms for disbursing aid money, commonly referred as ‘new aid modalities’, which were later to support the implementation of the Paris Declaration at country level. They are: Budget support, Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)<sup>22</sup>, Basket Funding, and Joint Assistance Strategies (JAS). Together they consolidated a new architecture for development financing.

#### **Central Approaches to Planning and Aid delivery in the New Aid Architecture**

##### **Budget Support**

Budget Support covers financial assistance as a contribution to the country’s central budget. Within this category, funds may be nominally accounted for against certain sectors, but there is no formal limitation on where funds may actually be spent.

There are two main types of Budget Support: General Budget Support (GBS) supports the government’s budget as a whole; Sector Budget Support is earmarked for a discrete sector of the government budget (as part of a SWAP).

The key framework that determines the relationship between donors and a government receiving General Budget Support are a) the Memorandum of Understanding – the original contract; and b)

<sup>22</sup> Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) are two terms that refer to the same type of document.



the Performance Assessment Framework which is used to monitor the use and allocation of Budget Support.

### **Sector Wide Approach (SWAP)**

Sector Wide Approaches involve donor support to the development of an entire sector in a given country, such as health, education or agriculture, rather than specific project support. Such support is generally linked to donor joint support for a government ministry, such as health or education, but can also include other funding relationships linked to a given sector.

### **Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)**

PRSPs were introduced by the World Bank and IMF in the 1990s as a prerequisite for debt reduction by its poorest and most indebted country clients. In recent years, these Strategy Papers have been adopted by almost all official donors as a guide to their country assistance programmes. The PRSP is intended to outline the country's main problems relating to poverty and its strategy to overcome them. PRSPs are meant to be drafted by the recipient government through a national participatory process in consultation with the World Bank and IMF. The Boards of the International Financial Institutions (IFI) still approve the final version of a country's PRSP.

### **Basket Funding**

Basket Funding is a joint funding modality by several donors towards a programme, sector or budget support. It may entail agreement of donors on harmonised procedures and terms and conditions of these assistance programmes with recipients.

### **Joint Assistance Strategies**

Joint Assistance Strategies are intended to make it easier for aid recipient governments to coordinate the activities of individual donors and encourage donor harmonisation. They are often coordinated by the World Bank to provide a framework for dialogue between a government and donors as a collective group.

*Source: Alemany, Cecilia (et al); Implementing the Paris Declaration: Implications for the promotion of women's rights and gender equality, Canadian Council for International Cooperation, January 2008.*

The Paris Declaration makes important advances in terms of setting a new language and discourse on new ways of working: the positioning of the MDGs providing a guiding framework for aid effectiveness, the emphasis on 'partner country' ownership of its own development plans as an intention to move away from historical unequal power relations and conditions imposed by donors; the partnership approach between donors and recipient countries; the recognition of the need to adapt aid to local contexts and situations

– including those involving challenging humanitarian conditions, the particularities of dealing with fragile states and countries experiencing armed conflict, all amount to positive advances towards aid delivery. It should be noted, however, that while the spirit of partnership drives the rhetoric of the new approach to aid as a way of setting a positive and more collaborative direction, the power asymmetries between donor and recipient countries make it difficult for this ‘new relationship’ to be qualified as a partnership. This has been highlighted by Bissio (2008) when he stated that a partnership involves a legal relationship between equals which is not the case here. For this reason, I use the term ‘partner countries’ with discomfort throughout the thesis. The Paris Declaration deals with the need to harmonise efforts and thus avoid overburdening recipient countries with bureaucracy resulting from uncoordinated aid. It recognises the difficulties of tied aid and conditionality and the need to deal with these sensitive issues. The resulting principles represent a major step from the part of the international community to come together to solidify its relationships around the goal of poverty eradication.

But the Paris Declaration is far from perfect. Many Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), none of which were included in the development process of the Paris Declaration<sup>23</sup>, have expressed scepticism over the OECD’s legitimacy and capacity to lead the aid effectiveness process and contended that the organisation represents ‘the donors club’ of mainly industrialised countries who follow an increasingly neoliberal approach for promoting economic development. With 34 members in total, the OECD is not considered representative enough of developing countries’ interests. It is argued that the UN, the Financing for Development process in particular, is the legitimate space and mechanism for this type of policy debate and decision making as it uses more inclusive, representative and democratic processes (Brown and Morton, 2008). The Financing for Development process also allows for broad engagement of CSOs and the private sector, governments from North and South as well as key international institutions such as World Bank, the IMF and the WTO.

In early 2007 a group of civil society organisations formed a steering group – now called Better Aid Coordinating Group – to coordinate advocacy efforts. Their coordination of

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<sup>23</sup> Only 30 CSOs were invited to the signing of the Paris Declaration and their participation was limited to the reading of the statement.



efforts came as a result of dissatisfaction with the narrow focus of the principle of ownership of the Paris Declaration, interpreted as ownership by government officials in dialogue with donor officials and excluding parliaments, civil society, private sector, etc. The Coordinating Group facilitated CSO engagement in the Third High Level Forum of 2008 in Accra, Ghana, the mid-term review of the Paris Declaration, and submitted recommendations. This set an important precedent in terms of CSO participation in what had been discussions between bilateral and multilateral representatives.

The Paris Declaration has been widely criticized for being too technical, donor driven and for imposing most of the responsibility for change in recipient countries. The process has focused on procedures of aid management and delivery and pays insufficient attention and resources to assess and monitor actual impact in terms of achieving development goals such as poverty reduction, pro-poor growth, and the elimination of social discrimination and disparities, including gender inequality (Better Aid, 2010; Bissio, 2007).

The Monitoring Survey conducted in 2008 (Better Aid) had determined that the pace of progress was too slow. The High Level Forum held in Accra, Ghana was meant to help accelerate and deepen implementation of the Paris Declaration. The forum, different from the process leading to the Paris Declaration, counted with the input of an unprecedented number of CSOs – about 1000 in total – coordinated by the Better Aid Steering Group. The forum resulted in the signing of the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) committing countries to the five principles of aid effectiveness established in the Paris Declaration (ownership, alignment, harmonisation, mutual accountability and managing for results). During this process, CSOs contested the implicit assumption of the Paris Declaration – that more efficient delivery of aid would automatically translate into improved development results. In response, donor governments and partner countries issued their own challenge, calling on CSOs to demonstrate and account for their own effectiveness (Open Forum, 2011).

The Accra Agenda for Action addressed three important issues considered to be the main challenges in accelerating progress towards aid effectiveness and which are briefly described here:

1. Strengthening country ownership – A. Commitment to broaden country-level policy dialogue on development (paragraph 13), B. Developing countries to strengthen their capacity to lead and manage development (paragraph 14) , C.

Donors to strengthen and use developing country systems to the maximum extent possible (paragraph 15).

2. Building more effective and inclusive partnerships for development – A. Commitment to reduce the costly fragmentation of aid (paragraph 17), B. Commitment to increase aid's value for money (paragraph 18), C. Commitment to work with all development actors (paragraph 19), D. Commitment to deepen engagement with civil society organisations (paragraph 20), E. Commitment to adapt aid policies for countries in fragile situations (paragraph 21).

3. Delivering and accounting for development results –A. Commitment to focus on delivering results (paragraph 23), B. Commitment to be more accountable and transparent to the public for results (paragraph 24), C. Commitment to continue to change the nature of conditionality to support ownership (paragraph 25) by switching from prescriptive conditions about how and when aid money is spent to conditions based on partner country's own development objectives, D. Commitment to increase the medium-term predictability of aid (paragraph 26). Where possible, donors are to provide 3-5 year estimates of their planned aid. Donors are to relax restrictions that prevent developing countries from buying the goods and services they need from whomever and wherever they can get the best quality at the lowest price.

4. Commitment to be more accountable and transparent to the public for results – A. Making aid more transparent, B. Commitment to conduct mutual assessment reviews, C. Fighting corruption. Out of this commitments emerged a group of countries and representatives of philanthropic foundations who went on to launch the International Aid Transparency Initiative. It is a voluntary multi stakeholder initiative that seeks to improve aid transparency by making available information on aid available to the public.<sup>24</sup>

In terms of gender equality specifically, the Accra Agenda for Action (OECD,2008b) made the following important statements:

Gender equality, respect for human rights, and environmental sustainability are

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<sup>24</sup> See [www.aidtransparency.net](http://www.aidtransparency.net) for details.



cornerstones for achieving enduring impact on the lives and potential of poor women, men, and children. It is vital that all our policies address these issues in a more systematic and coherent way. (OECD, 2008b; paragraph 3)

Developing countries and donors will ensure that their respective development policies and programmes are designed and implemented in ways consistent with their agreed international commitments on gender equality, human rights, disability and environmental sustainability. (OECD, 2008b; paragraph 13c)

At country level, donors and developing countries will work and agree on a set of realistic peace- and state-building objectives that address the root causes of conflict and fragility and help ensure the protection and participation of women. (OECD, 2008b; paragraph 21b)

Developing countries will strengthen the quality of policy design, implementation and assessment by improving information systems, including, as appropriate, disaggregating data by sex, region and socioeconomic status. (OECD, 2008b; paragraph 23a)

These statements were very welcome by gender equality advocates across the board as they represent important gains in what began as a completely gender blind aid agenda. However, these gains are considered 'modest' as they were not accompanied by resources to achieve them nor indicators were developed to back or follow up on the commitments (Craviotto, 2008).

#### **2.4. Alternative ideas of effectiveness**

After Accra, Civil Society Organisations launched the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness. They had refused to sign up to the Paris Declaration after concluding that their role goes well beyond the delivery of international aid and that the Paris Declaration did not represent a good measure to judge their effectiveness. They set to develop their own measures of effectiveness and, after a series of national and regional seminars and consultations, the Open Forum held its first Global Assembly on September 2010 in Istanbul, Turkey endorsing what are known now as the 'Istanbul Principles'. The concept of development effectiveness was introduced to argue that effective development requires more than just effective institutional aid. Aid effectiveness, thus, is seen as a small part of the larger development process. In turn, development effectiveness is about the impact of the actions of development actors, including international aid, on improving the lives of the poor and marginalised. It promotes sustainable change that addresses the root causes as well as the symptoms of poverty, inequality and marginalisation (Better Aid, 2010).

In its preamble, the Istanbul Principles define CSOs as distinct development actors on the basis of being voluntary, diverse, non-partisan, autonomous, non-violent, working and collaborating for change. The Istanbul Principles are to guide the work from grassroots to policy advocacy, and in a continuum from humanitarian emergencies to long-term development.

### **Istanbul CSO Development Effectiveness Principles**

#### **1. Respect and promote human rights and social justice**

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... develop and implement strategies, activities and practices that promote individual and collective human rights, including the right to development, with dignity, decent work, social justice and equity for all people.

#### **2. Embody gender equality and equity while promoting women and girls' rights**

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... promote and practice development cooperation embodying gender equity, reflecting women's concerns and experience, while supporting women's efforts to realize their individual and collective rights, participating as fully empowered actors in the development process.

#### **3. Focus on people empowerment, democratic ownership and participation**

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... support the empowerment and inclusive participation of people to expand their democratic ownership over policies and development initiatives that affect their lives, with an emphasis on the poor and marginalized.

#### **4. Promote environmental sustainability**

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... develop and implement priorities and approaches that promote environmental sustainability for present and future generations, including urgent responses to climate crises, with specific attention to the socio-economic, cultural and indigenous conditions for ecological integrity and justice.

#### **5. Practice transparency and accountability**

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... demonstrate a sustained organizational commitment to transparency, multiple accountability, and integrity in their internal operations.



## **6. Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity**

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... commit to transparent relationships with CSOs and other development actors, freely and as equals, based on shared development goals and values, mutual respect, trust, organizational autonomy, long-term accompaniment, solidarity and global citizenship.

## **7. Create and share knowledge and commit to mutual learning**

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... enhance the ways they learn from their experience, from other CSOs and development actors, integrating evidence from development practice and results, including the knowledge and wisdom of local and indigenous communities, strengthening innovation and their vision for the future they would like to see.

## **8. Commit to realising positive sustainable change**

CSOs are effective as development actors when they ... collaborate to realize sustainable outcomes and impacts of their development actions, focusing on results and conditions for lasting change for people, with special emphasis on poor and marginalized populations, ensuring an enduring legacy for present and future generations.

*Source: Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness ([http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/final\\_istanbul\\_cso\\_development\\_effectiveness\\_principles\\_foot\\_note\\_december\\_2010-2.pdf](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/final_istanbul_cso_development_effectiveness_principles_foot_note_december_2010-2.pdf)) accessed December 29, 2011*

Also after Accra, the Better Aid Coordination Group (BACG) began engaging more formally with the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF) of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Since 2003 the WP-EFF had been the main forum for discussion of aid effectiveness and development priorities in the context of ODA. But it was only after Accra that it became an international partnership for aid effectiveness<sup>25</sup> and brought together a fuller range of stakeholders and development actors to continue monitoring progress on the implementation of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action and report back to the following (Fourth) High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness

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<sup>25</sup> The work of the Third World Institute critiques the denomination of 'partnership' to the relationship between donors, recipient countries established in the PD. Based on the definition of partnership as 'a legal relation existing between two or more persons contractually associated as joint principals in a business' or 'a relationship resembling a legal partnership and usually involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities' the Paris Declaration text does not constitute a contractual relationship between the signatories and therefore it cannot be classified as a partnership in the legal sense (Bissio, 2008).

in South Korea in 2011. The WP-EFF is supported by the OECD GENDERNET (the DAC Network on Gender Equality). GENDERNET is the OECD forum where experts from development cooperation agencies meet to define common approaches specifically in support of gender equality. For greater clarity, refer to diagram in Annex 2 which illustrates the main actors in the process and how they are connected.

## **2.5. What has been achieved?**

Up to 2010 – the target date established in the Paris Declaration – donors had met only 1 out of 9 global targets that they were responsible for meeting. It is reported that they had made less effort and less progress than developing countries in implementing aid effectiveness commitments since 2005 even though commitments demanded less from donors (Better Aid, 2011). The Aid Effectiveness Review Report 2005-10 produced by the OECD, describes the findings in a more optimistic tone as follows:

While many donors and partner country governments have made progress towards the targets that they set themselves for 2010, few of them have been met. Partner country authorities appear to have gone further in implementing their commitments under the Paris Declaration than donors, though efforts – and progress – also vary across countries and donor organisations. As the international community prepares to take stock of what has been achieved at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Busan, Korea, 29 November to 1 December 2011), this report sets out evidence of progress and challenges in making aid more effective, and should help to forge a consensus on the way forward in ensuring that aid supports development results beyond Busan. The Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness arrives at a crossroads in a context of development cooperation characterised by a wider range of development stakeholders. There is greater recognition that aid – and its effectiveness – are only one element of a broader landscape of development finance, and that finding related to joint efforts to make aid more effective can and should inform a broader development effectiveness agenda going forward. (OECD, 2011)

The table that follows has been reproduced from the OECD report for illustrative purposes. It outlines the extent to which the global targets established in the Paris Declaration were achieved by the target year of 2010. (Source: OECD (2011) *Aid Effectiveness 2005-2010: Progress in Implementing the Paris Declaration*, OECD Publishing, page 19)



## To what extent have global targets been met? Paris Declaration indicators and targets, 2010

Paris Declaration Indicator	2010 Actual	2010 Target <sup>a</sup>	Status
<b>1 Operational Development Strategies</b> % of countries having a national development strategy rated "A" or "B" on a five-point scale <sup>a</sup>	37% (of 76)	75%	Not met
<b>2a Reliable public financial management (PFM) systems</b> % of countries moving up at least one measure on the PFM/CPIA scale since 2005 <sup>a</sup>	38% (of 52)	50%	Not met
<b>2b Reliable procurement systems</b> % of countries moving up at least one measure on the four-point scale since 2005	--	No Target <sup>c</sup>	--
<b>3 Aid flows are aligned on national priorities</b> % of aid for the government sector reported on the government's budget <sup>a</sup>	41%	85%	Not met
<b>4 Strengthen capacity by co-ordinated support</b> % of technical co-operation implemented through co-ordinated programmes consistent with national development strategies <sup>a</sup>	57%	50%	<b>Met</b>
<b>5a Use of country PFM systems</b> % of aid for the government sector using partner countries' PFM systems <sup>b</sup>	46%	55%	Not met
<b>5b Use of country procurement systems</b> % of aid for the government sector using partner countries' procurement systems	44%	No Target <sup>c</sup>	--
<b>6 Strengthen capacity by avoiding parallel PIUs</b> Total number of parallel project implementation units (PIUs) <sup>b</sup>	1 158	565	Not met
<b>7 Aid is more predictable</b> % of aid for the government sector disbursed within the fiscal year for which it was scheduled and recorded in government accounting systems <sup>b</sup>	43%	71%	Not met
<b>8 Aid is untied</b> % of aid that is fully untied <sup>a</sup>	86%	More than 89%	Not met
<b>9 Use of common arrangements or procedures</b> % of aid provided in the context of programme-based approaches <sup>a</sup>	45%	66%	Not met
<b>10a Joint missions</b> % of donor missions to the field undertaken jointly <sup>a</sup>	19%	40%	Not met
<b>10b Joint country analytic work</b> % of country analytic work undertaken jointly <sup>a</sup>	43%	66%	Not met
<b>11 Results-oriented frameworks</b> % of countries with transparent and monitorable performance assessment frameworks <sup>a</sup>	20% (of 44)	36%	Not met
<b>12 Mutual accountability</b> % of countries with mutual assessment reviews in place <sup>a</sup>	38%	100%	Not met

### Notes:

- Assessment against 2010 target uses data for all 78 countries participating in 2011 for which data were available. Where data are available for only a subset of these countries, the sample size is indicated in brackets.
- Assessment against 2010 target uses data for the 32 countries participating in both the 2006 and 2011 Surveys, as the indicator target is formulated in relation to the 2005 baseline. Targets may differ from those published in previous years as baselines have been recalculated, omitting data from two countries (Nicaragua and Yemen) which formed part of the original panel of 34 countries participating in 2006, but which did not participate in 2011.
- No targets are presented for indicators 2b (reliable procurement systems) and 5b (use of country procurement systems) as the sample of countries for whom data on the quality of systems are available is too small to allow for meaningful analysis.
- The targets shown may differ from indicative targets published in previous years as a result of adjustments to historical data (e.g. indicator 8, where final data on tying led to adjustments to the underlying datasets after publication of reports on the previous surveys). The target for indicator 5a (use of country PFM systems) has been computed to consider the 2010 scores on the quality of PFM systems (indicator 2a), consistent with the approach agreed in the Paris Declaration and described in Chapter 3.

A significant highlight from the OECD report is the shift on focus from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness. This shift was also reflected in the subsequent review of the Paris Declaration – the Fourth High Level Forum held in Busan, South Korea (December, 2011) – and was affirmed in the Busan outcome document (BOD). In resonance with remarks from CSOs earlier in Istanbul, the outcome document recognised aid as only part of the solution to development and that ‘it is now time to broaden our focus and attention

from aid effectiveness to the challenges of effective development' (BOD, 2011, paragraph 28).

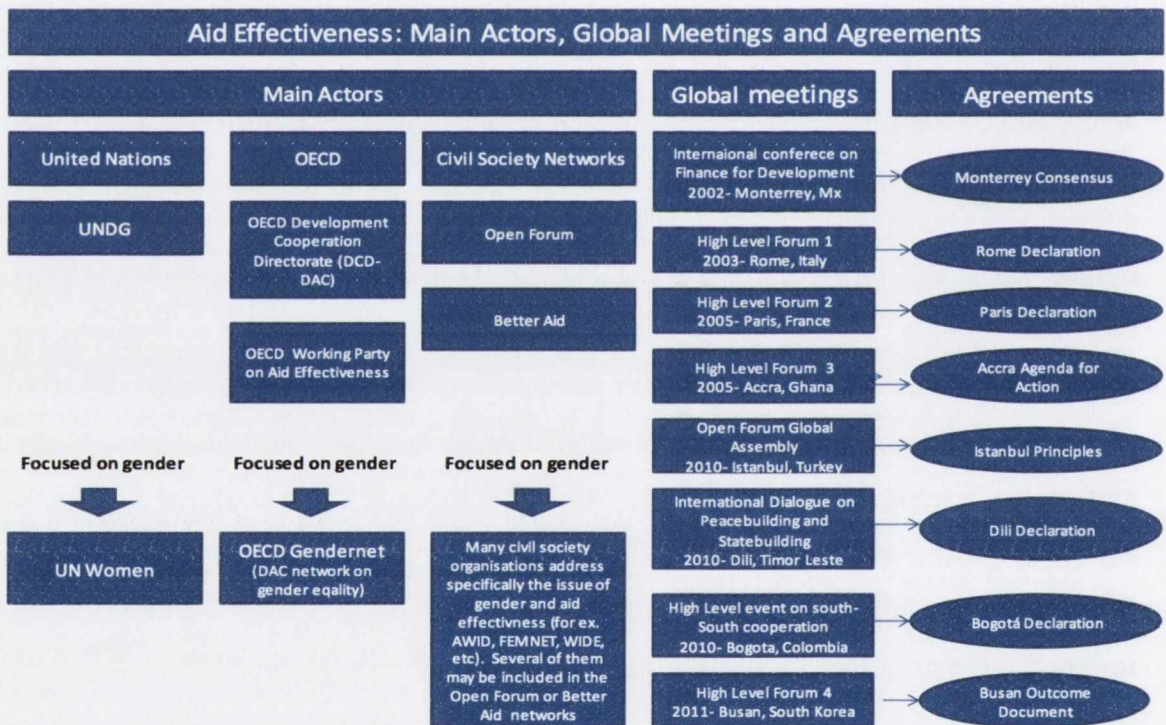
The BOD also highlighted Civil Society Organisations as development actors in their own right and their role 'in enabling people claim their rights, in promoting rights-based approaches, in shaping development policies and partnerships, and in overseeing their implementation' (BOD, 2011, paragraph 22). The BOD endorsed the Istanbul Principles produced by CSOs back in 2010. This represents a clear advance from the Paris and Accra processes in terms of broadening the principle of ownership of aid effectiveness, one that before had been limited to promoting ownership of the aid effectiveness agenda 'by government officials in dialogue with donor officials'. CSOs had been advocating for 'democratic ownership' which ensured a more inclusive approach. Since 2005 this principle had been the subject of widespread critiques as the Paris Declaration had failed to account for important issues of inclusion, human rights, gender equality, decent work and accountability for sustainable development outcomes for poor and vulnerable people (Reality of Aid, 2010).

A 'new partnership for effective development' was fomented in Busan intending to shift the focus from a technical view of the aid effectiveness agenda towards a new development effectiveness agenda that is more inclusive, holistic, and focused on results as rights based development outcomes rather than just aid delivery. Through the Busan partnership, a new global governance framework is intended to move the development agenda towards a framework that involves not only the OECD-DAC, but also the United Nations, South-South Cooperation actors, parliamentarians and local authorities, civil society and the private sector (WIDE, 2011).

The Fourth High Level Forum in Busan did produce a significant rhetorical shift in terms of gender equality and human rights. Gender equality and women's empowerment feature strongly in the BOD – a clear advancement if compared to Paris and Accra. This gain, however, remained fragile and ambiguous as the Busan forum was mainly about South to South co-operation and about acknowledging the new role of the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) and new donors in the development cooperation landscape. It did not do anything to set concrete goals or commitments to development effectiveness and



the principles that were set out remain completely voluntary. While gender equality did feature highly both in the Busan Outcome Document and in the proceedings, scepticism by many gender advocates (and governments) remains. The US took a lead role presenting a proposal for an Action Plan on Gender (in partnership with Korea) which focused heavily on women's economic empowerment, their integration to the market and access to credit. Women's organisations made it very clear that they are not going to endorse the plan (which was rather a concept note) as it promotes women as instruments of economic growth rather than rights holders in the plan. Only Canada, Ireland, the private sector and the World Bank endorsed the plan while others (presumably governments) remained quiet sharing discontent with the quality of the consultation process led by the US during the bilateral meetings (WIDE delegate email notes, 2011).



## 2.6. Analysis: Gender Blindness and the Paris Declaration

Ackerly reminds us that 'most or all feminist scholarship is about making visible that which is invisible, or hearing that which is going unheard, or noticing that women are missing, or noticing that women are disproportionately affected by a broad reaching phenomenon like poverty and natural disasters' (Ackerly, 2009: 10). Disproportionately affected by unequal gender relations, women and the power relations that keep their unequal status

unchanged are by necessity of primary concern in feminist analysis. Ackerly points that the key features of critical feminist theories (such as those in Feminist Political Economy, Gender and Development and others) are that they use deconstructive analysis and give us the tools we need to see any injustice more clearly. This segment draws from such pursuits to analyse the concept of and approaches to aid effectiveness embodied by the Paris Declaration.

One of the most notable absentees in the Paris Declaration is a definition of 'aid effectiveness'. Aid effectiveness can be defined as the extent to which foreign aid dollars actually achieve their goals of reducing poverty, malnutrition, disease, and death (Easterly and Pfutze, 2008). The text of Paris Declaration, however, reveals a different understanding: a focus on establishing effective money management systems to deliver and monitor aid and not on achieving development goals or ensuring a positive impact in the lives of those that aid intends to benefit. This understanding is particularly evidenced by the indicators of progress outlined in the document which do not bear correlation with achieving development goals. In this sense the use of the word 'effectiveness' alongside the word 'aid' for the title of the declaration is misleading. The director of a UK based NGO and Research centre made an important distinction when he pointed out:

It is not about effectiveness, it is about making aid more efficient for donors and financial institutions. Being efficient is not bad per definition, but it is a different concept from effectiveness. Enrolling a large group of girls in school in a short period of time is not effective aid when the quality of education is poor. They don't learn anything. (Mannak, 2008)

While effective money management systems are necessary in making aid more effective, their establishment does not necessarily translate into effective outcomes. Successful aid effectiveness results in the Paris Declaration, as expressed in the section of 'Managing for Results' indicators, are contingent to setting 'transparent and monitorable assessment frameworks to assess progress against (a) the national development strategies and (b) sector programmes' (Paris Declaration, 2005). These national development strategies and sector programmes, as will be demonstrated later in the text, are incongruent with tracking or measuring development outcomes/ poverty reduction results. In particular, they are largely gender blind and seem to act counter to gender equality goals and women's human rights. As it will be seen in the paragraphs that follow, and to highlight particular blind spots



in the Paris Declaration, the omission of gender equality in the national development strategies is not an isolated occurrence.

***Gender equality is not explicitly mentioned in the Paris Declaration.*** Gender equality is only vaguely referred to in the last point of the section on 'Harmonisation' as an example of one of 'the other cross cutting issues' that need to be considered (Paris Declaration, point 42). In this respect, the Paris Declaration does not explicitly build on any of the areas and rhetorical commitments regarding gender equality made in Monterrey Consensus.

According to Gaynor (2007) while there is evidence of discussion and analysis of the implications of the Paris Declaration and new aid modalities for gender quality and women's empowerment the agenda was carried out mainly by technocrats and without the active engagement of gender specialists at macro-level or during in-country implementation.

Donor agency formal responses to the Paris Declaration and websites on aid effectiveness suggest that few connections were made before 2006 between these issues and gender equality. Talking to social and gender specialists in headquarters and field level, they indicate that they did not participate in early work on the new aid architecture. The PD agenda was the remit of a rather select group and gender specialists did not make early connections. (Gaynor, 2007: 5)

As early as January 2006 it was recognised that if efforts to incorporate gender equality were not accelerated, there was a risk of missing opportunities to channel scaled up aid to address gender equality and women's empowerment. The summary report of the joint meeting between the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and the OECD-DAC Network on Gender Equality further warned that this could result in new institutions, processes and systems operating without recognition of their gendered nature. Two years later, at the mid-term review of the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action made a step forward in recognising gender equality, human rights (and environmental sustainability) as goals that effective aid must support (AAA, 2008, paragraph 3). But it still fell short in stating that resources must be committed to these ends and did not put forward incentives or indicators to track results (Craviotto, 2008).

Considering how much awareness there was about the serious implications of strengthening gender equality and women's empowerment in the aid effectiveness process, this 'step forward' was just not enough.

***The Paris Declaration does not explicitly mention or require alignment or harmonisation with other international commitments.*** Despite the commitments made in the various UN conferences in 1990s (the Earth Summit, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights, the Platform for Action of the Conference on Population and Development ) the Paris Declaration does not explicitly build on any these. There is no substantial mention of gender equality or respect for human rights, and no statements about them in the context of being desirable outcomes of effective aid.

Of particular notoriety is the disconnect and lack of references to gender mainstreaming, the globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality recommended in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995). Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities: policy development, research, advocacy/ dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects (UN Women, 2011). An OECD report looking at changes in development co-operation agencies states:

Despite progress, no agency fully matches its own political rhetoric and objectives on gender equality with the required human and financial resources or accountability measures to ensure progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment. (OECD, 2007: 7)

Paradoxically, the same report refers to 'an internal culture oriented towards economics and technical aims' as the barrier to full gender mainstreaming (in the OECD itself). Such a culture, it cites, 'breeds a lack of knowledge and willingness to promote gender equality, lack of gender awareness raising and training for staff, and lack of means [i.e. staff]' (OECD, 2007: 31). This finding might well help explain one of the reasons why gender has not fared well in the Paris Declaration.

***Reliance of the Paris Declaration on the use of new aid modalities is problematic for women's human rights:*** The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) are a prerequisite of the World Bank and IMF for lending to countries classified as poor, including heavily



indebted poor countries (HIPC), or countries 'in transition'. The PRSPs are meant to be the result of national participatory processes in consultation with the World Bank and IMF. In recent years, these strategy papers have been adopted by almost all official donors as a guide to their country assistance programmes – they have become the 'de facto' national plans (Zuckerman and Garret, 2003). The existence of these 'national plans' is considered one of two indicators of aid effectiveness results under the Paris Declaration (Paris Declaration, 2005, indicator 11).

PRSPs are linked to other aspects of economic development. For instance, they contain policies that are frequently linked to the privatisation of essential services such as health, education, water access, energy and sanitation (Alemany et al, 2008; Williams, 2007). These issues impact particularly the social and economic empowerment of women. There is evidence that in many cases, such as in Kenya and Ghana (Alemany et al, 2008), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers do not contain a gender analysis of the proposed policies and participation of women's rights and gender advocates in the consultations leading to the development of the documents is limited (Visvanathan et al, 2011; Alemany et al, 2008; de la Cruz, 2008). In these and many such cases where gender is poorly addressed by the PRSPs, gender commitments are weak and remain unsupported by particular budgets. This implicitly reinforces unequal gender patterns that hinder development for both women and men (Alemany et al, 2007; Zuckerman et al, 2003).

Limited overall participation of women and civil society organisations in the development process of Poverty Reduction Strategy papers has additionally undermined the 'ownership' aspect of national plans, one of the key principles of the Paris Declaration. Evidence suggest that for the most part, PRSPs are driven by the executive level of governments (Ministers of Finance and Presidential office) and tend to ignore the input that CSOs would have made earlier in the process (Alemany et al, 2008). In some cases there have been protests from national parliaments for what they perceive as exclusion from the process.<sup>26</sup> In countries with Women or Gender Ministries, their influence and participation on budgetary discussions has been very small (Alemany et al, 2008; de la Cruz, 2008).

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<sup>26</sup> This is according to a participant of a workshop held in Ottawa sponsored by the Canadian Council for International Cooperation on the 26<sup>th</sup> May 2006. Full quote available in Alemany et al, 2006, page 21.

A related key concern about the PRSPs is the issue of aid conditionality. PRSPs have to be approved by a Committee of the World Bank and IMF staff. If they reject the draft, the country does not qualify for World Bank or IMF support and it is unlikely to receive bilateral funding. Van Reisen (2005) suggests direct parallels exist between the PRSP process and qualifying for debt relief and earlier forms of conditionality – many of the conditions referring to macro-economic policies. There have been concerns that, when asked about priorities, recipient governments opt for programmes that they think will be accepted even if they conflict with priorities identified through a consultative process. A Minister of Finance from one of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) is quoted saying: ‘... we don’t want to second guess the Fund. We prefer to pre-empt them by giving them what they want before they start lecturing us about this and that’ (Van Reisen, 2005: 36). External conditionalities work against the principle of ownership and undermine internal accountability. According to a study from the Dutch government exposed by Bissio (2008) ‘the international financial institutions are limiting the scope for devolving more control and accountability for policy and aid to the government by “interfering intensively with the PRSP and with macro and sector policies”’ (Bissio, 2008: 9).

Since the other aid modalities (General Budget Support, Sector Wide Approaches and Basket Funding) rely on PRSPs, they also tend to not address gender adequately or do so very poorly. Even in the cases where the PRSPs do contain gender objectives, they are usually not accompanied by matching budget allocations. Some of the more positive experiences of sector wide approaches (SWAPs), for instance, are mainly in the health and education sectors where investments were made mainly under the narrowly defined category of ‘women and girls’, rather than addressing the root causes behind their unequal access to these services (van Reisen, 2005). Gender is not considered a sector under SWAPs so reliance on Gender Mainstreaming and adequate gender analysis of policies across the board become more urgent if gender relations and women’s rights are to be addressed.

***Absence of human rights language and rights based approaches to development*** – Of concern regarding the lack of references to human rights in the Paris Declaration is that human rights are essential to achieving gender equality (UNFPA, 2000). The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the programme of action of the International Conference on Population (ICPD) and the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth



Conference on Women (FWCW) strongly support gender equality and women's empowerment. The ICPD and the FWCW in particular unequivocally articulate the concepts of sexual and reproductive health (including the right to sexual and reproductive health), as well as voluntary choice in marriage, sexual relations and child bearing; freedom from sexual violence and coercion; and the right to privacy, all of which are essential to gender equality (UNFPA, 2000: 47).

Of further concern regarding the absence of human rights language in the Paris Declaration and subsequent review processes is the reticence to use human rights language. As recently as in the negotiations taking place in Paris as part of the review process of the Paris Declaration (celebrated last December 2011 in Busan, South Korea) a disturbing tendency towards blocking the language of human rights (HR) in the draft outcome documents was at play. A participant from a CSO working group present in one of the meetings reported by email:

Though [name withheld] was not facilitating she was still dead set on limiting references [on Human Rights] as much as possible. We do have the benefit of having some key players supporting the reference to HR, but not to the extent that we are aspiring. It is not clear if this obstruction is coming from the Korean Government only or if [same name withheld] is speaking on behalf of some silent stakeholders, but any attempts to expand references to human rights, by for example including rights based approaches, references to empowerment, inclusion and the rule of law, are summarily shot down by the Vice-Chair. So while we have the support of some key players on referencing Human Rights, they stop short of supporting efforts to expand the HR language, and rather defer to what was agreed in the MDGs and in the AAA. (Women's Working Group, email communication, 22 November, 2011)

These trends resonate with the apprehension of many CSOs and women's advocates of how the language of the Paris Declaration reflects an economically focused understanding of poverty reduction.

The deliberate silence on language related to respecting human rights at the proceedings leading to the Busan forum (as described above) denies the intrinsic human right to live free from poverty and the urgency of addressing women's human rights through more effective use of aid. 'Removing the realisation of rights, including women's human rights, from the donors' agenda is part of a wider tendency to define development in terms of

instruments rather than the social changes needed to make a fairer world. Preference for technical solutions to fix what are perceived as technical problems is a popular trend amongst many donors. Also 'value for money' becomes equated with aggregated numbers rather than with value supporting social transformation' (Eyben, 2010a).

***Absence of meaningful links with the Millennium Development Goals*** – It must also be noted that the Paris Declaration, while silent on human rights and development goals in terms of its indicators, does refer to the MDGs in its statement of resolve as drivers of the aid effectiveness agenda (albeit in a very general manner). Two out of the eight goals address gender issues: MDG 2 focuses on improving maternal health, and MDG 3 focuses on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The eight goals, said to be congruent with human development thinking, are also described by the Millennium Project<sup>27</sup> as basic human rights – the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter and security. But this rather tenuous link between the Paris Declaration and human rights deserves further examination. The MDGs do not use a rights-based approach and do not deal with violence against women (VAW) which, in light of the pandemic proportions this issue has reached, some have denominated VAW as 'the missing MDG' (Anderson, 2013). Numerous international instruments have brought attention to the gender dimensions of human rights, the most important of which is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) signed in 1979. Together with other instruments, CEDAW provides a legal foundation for gender equality by ending gender discrimination and gender based rights violations. But, as it was stated already, these were all left out of the Paris Declaration. Some human rights violations are intrinsically gendered, such as violence against women (VAW), gender based violence, or depriving women from their sexual health and reproductive rights.

The link between the MDGs and human rights was not only made by the Millennium Project. In fact, the Human Development Report of 2000 'Human Rights and Human Development' had established this nexus more formally. The report asserted that human capabilities and rights are ultimately grounded in the importance of freedoms for human lives. Human development and human rights, it states, are close enough in motivation and

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<sup>27</sup> The Millennium Project was commissioned by the UN Secretary- General in 2002 to develop an action plan for the achievement of the MDG goals.



concern to be compatible and congruous, while different enough in strategy and design to supplement each other fruitfully.

A more integrated approach can thus bring significant rewards, and facilitate in practical ways the shared attempts to advance dignity, well being and freedom of individuals in general. (HDR 2000: 19)

My question now is whether the reference to the achievement of the MDGs in the preamble of the Paris Declaration, general as it is, was a genuine attempt to provide a human rights 'spirit' to the new aid agenda. This question provides me with reasons to attend to the fine details underpinning this connection between human rights, human development and the MDGs, and interrogate how and why this link was such easy prey of the technocratic approach to aid effectiveness.

Attending to this concern, research carried out by Nelson (2007) found that there are fundamental conceptual differences between the approaches to poverty contained in the MDGs and those used in the human rights movement, including the policy recommendations supported by each and the type of social actors they are able to mobilise. He asserts that goals and rights come from different traditions in ethics and in political philosophy pointing that goals are distinctly utilitarian and calculated to maximise welfare gains. Nelson points that rights, on the other hand, make a normative claim, that human dignity entitles individuals to certain kinds of treatment and to protection from others. The MDGs, he further observes, create incentives for donors and governments to favour quick impact over addressing the complex and structural factors underlying poverty and wealth in poor countries (Nelson, 2007). This tendency is reflected in the 'quick wins' strategy outlined in the 2005 UN report on investing to advance the MDGs, which calls for funding for 'high potential, short-term impact' initiatives that can yield "breathtaking results within three or fewer years. . ." and "start countries on the path to the Goals" (quoted in Nelson, 2007: 25). Nelson refers to this as one of the reasons why the MDG campaign and human rights approaches are being embraced by actors with divergent visions of development with conflicting development agendas. While Nelson's critique does not point to a human rights spirit in the Paris Declaration, he does point to the neoliberal instrumental logic underpinning both the new aid agenda and the MDGs.

A clear interplay between the language of human rights, goals and politics is made visible when taking into account the overall neoliberal context into which development goals are to be achieved. The emphasis of the MDGs on measurable targets, quantities and numbers does not correlate to approaches where human agency and respect for human rights can flourish. Following Nelson in this line again:

Human rights-based approaches tend to call for attention to the causes and multiple dimensions of poverty, and to the linkages between poverty and civil and political freedoms; the MDGs are output indicators that aim primarily for progress in some of the worst symptoms of poverty. (Nelson, 2007)

Richard Jolly's analysis (2002) of the relationship between the human development paradigm and the neoliberal economic paradigm points that lack of clarity about definitions, strategies and policies embodied in human development need to be addressed if vague generalities are to be avoided. He describes how the human development terminology means different things to different people. This terminology, he asserts, has been used in ways that can obscure reality by those favouring the neoliberal agenda. This trend has been denounced by some feminists as the appropriation of feminist language and the distortion of feminist political goals introducing new challenges that need to be addressed (Harcourt, 2006).

Important distinctions between the objectives and strategies of the human development paradigm and those of the prevailing neoliberal economic paradigm can be seen as follows:

<b>Objectives and Strategies compared</b>	
Human Development	Neoliberalism
Objective: expansion of human opportunities	Objective: maximisation of economic welfare
Focus of concern: people	Focus of concern: markets
Guiding principle: equity and justice	Guiding principle: economic efficiency
Emphasis: ends	Emphasis: means
Trend focus: poverty reduction	Trend focus: economic growth
Poverty definition: population in multidimensional deprivation	Poverty definition: population below minimum income line
Key indicators: HDI, GDI, GEM and per cent of HPI	Key indicators: GDP, GNP growth and per cent below income poverty line



(Table reproduced from Jolly, 2005: 108)

Jolly's analysis also refers to important areas where both paradigms share common ground:

<b>Common Ground – but for different reasons</b>	
Human Development	Neoliberalism
<i>Underlying philosophy</i>	
-Freedom of choice: but by developing and strengthening human capabilities and functionings -Emphasizes Human Rights -Concern for equity and justice	-Freedom of choice: but by increasing utilities and satisfaction of preferences -Emphasizes mainly political and civil rights
<i>Education, health and nutrition</i>	
Important in themselves	Important as investment in human capital
As a means of empowerment	
As human rights	
<i>Ending discrimination</i>	
A human right	A human right
For fairness	For efficiency
<i>Governance</i>	
Democratic and inclusive	Democratic
Important state functions	Minimal state
Focus on all human rights	Focus on political and civil rights

(Table reproduced from Jolly, 2005: 109)

Jolly's analysis asserts the compatibility between the MDGs, as part of the mainstream economic development tradition of measuring outputs and targets, with the tendency to do away with references to human rights as intrinsically valuable in the aid effectiveness agenda. In this sense, the MDG framework fits very easily with the technocratic approach to aid effectiveness. William Easterly (2009) offers an astute perspective on technocracy here:

Yet the technocratic approach never really tests the proposition (which many would consider naïve) that technocracy will eventually yield equal rights, despite the technocratic veneration for 'evidence.' Nor does the technocratic vision consider how much 'we' may violate such rights (or unintentionally support such violations by others) of 'them' along the way. Even if there were such evidence, it would not address whether the final state of equal rights made it 'worth it' to violate rights along the way, and above all – who gets to decide? Putting rights at the end inevitably enmeshes 'us' in a tangle of paradoxes in which it will always be unclear who is benefiting from whom, or who is harming whom. Rights must come first, not last. (Easterly, 2009)

And when considering the current discussions on the post-MDG agenda, it does not seem that rights are anywhere near being considered a priority. This is hinted by expressions made by Jan Vandermoortele, one of the co-architects of the MDGs and a self-proclaimed technocrat in an interview when asked about the place of values of solidarity and human rights in the post-MDG agenda:

Look, we have enough [human rights related] instruments on the table already to reinforce those values and human rights concerns. We have the whole gamut. I don't believe that we need to repeat them for every little thing we put on the table for development. Don't get me wrong, I'm certainly not against human rights, equitable development and good governance — but we don't need to add those values to an already complicated agenda for development to foster progress. It's not going to work, it's going to fail. (quoted in Jones, 2013)

The quote above reveals the power that technocrats wield through the use of measurement instruments and tools that do not account for values and rights based approaches. This tendency to leave human rights out of donors' agendas in favour for efficiency / technocratic approaches has already been denounced by others (Eyben, 2012, Easterly, 2012). A UN official was quoted off record suggesting that in another two years, human rights will have completely disappeared from donors agendas (Eyben, 2012).

***Lack of gender-sensitive indicators to measure aid effectiveness*** (both in the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action). One of the issues with the indicators of progress set in the Paris Declaration, described above, is that they don't measure aid effectiveness on the basis of having positive impact on those intended to benefit from it. Instead, they measure the extent to which financial and operational management systems to administer aid are in place. Even within this context, there is no reference to using gender-sensitive tools, such as gender budgeting, or related strategies. This, despite the



fact that the OECD itself does account with a well-regarded Gender Equality Policy Marker intended to assist countries in disaggregating how much aid money goes to gender equality and women's empowerment policies (OECD-DAC, 2007). Gender responsive budgets (GRB) gained momentum right after the Beijing Platform of Action in 1995 as a tool to mainstream gender in development planning in order to secure the allocation of resources for gender equality and women's empowerment. UN Women, the International Labour Organisation and others (explored in the next chapter) have invested significantly in supporting countries to develop the necessary capacities to design and use GRB as a substantial strategy beyond indicators to ensure government commitments on human rights are resourced financially.

A second issue with the lack of impact oriented indicators is that beyond not capturing what is happening in the lives of the poorest, the Paris Declaration implicitly perpetuates reliance on the use of conventional measures of economic progress such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to make judgements on whether aid is contributing to a country's development (still defined as economic growth). As already discussed in the previous chapter, GDP is a gender blind measure and fraught with contradictions. Historically, the World Bank and other international financial institutions have relied on GDP as a measure of economic growth to determine whether a country is considered developed, developing or poor. Their classification system (high income countries, middle income, poor, etc) is based on the measure of countries' economic activity in dollar terms reflected by GDP (Soubbotina, 2000: 15). Countries classified as poor, including the HIPC's, are required to produce a PRSP to obtain loans. By not introducing any new index in the Paris Declaration it is natural to presume that GDP will remain guiding judgements about whether a country has moved from developing to developed as a consequence of 'effective' aid, and whether it will be required to have a PRSP in place to be eligible for loans.

## **2.7. Conclusion**

How the issues discussed above reflect in the Paris Declaration? By not acknowledging gender equality and respect for human rights, including women's human rights, the Paris Declaration can be considered an unjust framework to implement and understand aid effectiveness. As more than half of any countries' citizens are women and they constitute the majority of the world's poor, the inclusion of women's perspectives, gender equality

and human rights language and goals in the Paris Declaration is vital if aid is to be truly effective. Moreover, the omission of such perspectives amount to a document based on an incomplete understanding of human development.

Continual interference by the World Bank in both the content and final approval of Poverty Reduction Strategies not only undermines the principle of ownership but, as has been argued by civil society organisations monitoring this process, can amount to a violation of the right to development and other civil and political rights (Bissio, 2008). The trend of continuing to influence/ pressure developing countries agendas that began back in the 1980's continues to erode trust and exacerbate power relations between donors and recipient countries. There seems to be no difference between this type of conduct now and that of the past in terms of how the World Bank and IMF imposed certain neoliberal prescriptions to the problems of poorer countries (under Structural Adjustment Programmes) and which undermined the social and economic development of many poor countries, the hardships of which they are still working to overcome.

The intentional blockage of human rights language in some of the proceedings in the aid effectiveness process, and the lack of alignment of the Paris Declaration with international commitments on gender and human rights has broad repercussions. The non-inclusion of gender and human rights language and related targets directly affects the way in which PRS are conceptualised. If there is no expectation that PRS will contain gender-related analysis and goals, they will continue to be gender blind and resources to achieve gender equality goals will continue to be random at best, or absent altogether. By the current indicators in the Paris Declaration, the mere existence of the PRS is an indication of success regardless of its contents even if the policies outlined therein work against the very goals the Paris Declaration is intended to help achieve (Bissio, 2008). Echoing some of what women's organisations have expressed and considering that the Paris Declaration is meant to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals, the lack of gender and human rights language and commitments to these goals present, not just a serious obstacle, but a fundamental flaw towards their achievement.

At the heart of this trend, a tendency to measure progress in ways consistent with promoting a gender blind neoliberal economic ideology is evident. Preference for technical



approaches to aid efficiency rather addressing the values based issues of substance, such as gender equality have dominated (and will probably continue to dominate) the efforts of both donor and recipient countries (Gaynor, 2007). Technocracy thus rises as a form of power within the new aid agenda. In view of the poor record on donors' achievements evidenced by the 2010 review of the Paris Declaration and the trend to place emphasis on women's role in the economy to help economic growth (as per the proceedings in Busan) it is natural to assume that the future aid/ development effectiveness agenda (beyond Busan) will remain uncertain for human rights and gender equality goals. If these injustices are not rectified in the future follow up processes there is a danger that the new focus on development effectiveness (agreed in Busan) will be flawed from the outset. For development effectiveness to take place, serious attention to aligning aid efforts to the previously mentioned international agreements and broader goals need to be accorded with binding commitments and credible, gender responsive indicators to measure progress. This will involve a systematic capacity building effort on gender mainstreaming from the part of both donors and recipient countries, as evidence suggests internal organisational weakness in this area affects how gender and human rights gets treated externally.

The issue of measuring aid effectiveness will be discussed in following chapter. The analysis will look at various gender-sensitive indicators and proposals to provide a gender and human rights dimension to aid effectiveness. The objective is to identify any good practices as well as potential shortcomings that can inform the development of future indicators of aid effectiveness, and to better understand the processes by which such indicators can be generated.

### **Chapter 3. Engendering Aid Effectiveness Indicators: Assessing the proposals to date**

*'In the past we have treasured what we can measure. In the future we should identify what we treasure and then find out how to measure it.'*

Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner on Human Rights

The thesis so far has demonstrated that liberalisation policies driving the current development model underpinning and increasingly supported by aid have largely been detrimental to women's human rights and gender equality, thus affecting overall sustainable human development. It has pointed that a technocratic approach to aid effectiveness focused on efficiency neglects the inclusion of gender equality and human rights goals. Further, the thesis has taken issue with the absence of indicators that measure/ assess if and how aid impacts the development goals that it is meant to help achieve. The non-inclusion of gender and development oriented indicators in the Paris Declaration, assures an automatic place for GDP-oriented growth in aid effectiveness. As such, the Paris Declaration becomes an instrument for facilitating a more effective path towards ensuring primarily economic growth through gender blind neoliberal development. The previous chapter concluded by arguing for the need to reconceptualise what is meant by effectiveness moving away from 'the technocratic efficiency approach' and aiming towards an expanded notion where human rights, gender equality, and human development are part of how aid effectiveness is conceptualised and measured.

This chapter's purpose is twofold: 1) it sets to analyse the proposals of gender-sensitive indicators that have emerged since the Paris Declaration was adopted, and 2) it will also consider further alternatives to assess the effectiveness of foreign aid based on the human development paradigm. First, the chapter will introduce three alternative proposals for measuring aid effectiveness brought forward by some of the gender equality advocates working within the official framework set in the Paris Declaration of 2005. An analysis of their strengths, limitations and the opportunities presented by these indicators will follow asking whether they are sufficient to fill the indicators' gap in the Paris Declaration. This exercise provides valuable insight in considering research question 6, namely: what



elements characterise gender-sensitive indicators of aid effectiveness? The second part of the chapter will take stock of existing analytical and instrumental tools promoted by the human development paradigm. Based on Amartya Sen's capabilities approach the tools explored in this chapter represent the widest international consensus on desirable aspects of human development that aid should help realise. The chapter will introduce and analyse some of these measures, the Human Development Index (HDI) and gender-related indices. The discussion will raise some of the criticisms of their limits asking whether they can be considered viable tools to account for the missing human and gender dimensions of the aid effectiveness agenda.

### **3.1. Proposals of Gender-sensitive Indicators for Tracking the Paris Declaration**

Since the launch of the Paris Declaration (2005) and the emergence of the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) a number of gender equality advocates inside and outside the OECD and UN system have argued for the need to reflect a gender dimension to aid effectiveness and, specifically, to develop gender-sensitive indicators. Three groups in particular produced suggestions of indicators for countries to track gender in line with the principles of the Paris Declaration: (1) the African Gender and Development Evaluators Network (AGDEN), (2) the EC/UN Partnership for Development and Peace (consisting of the European Commission, the International Labour Organisation, and UNIFEM<sup>28</sup>), and (3) GENDERNET (the OECD/DAC network on Gender Equality). This segment will introduce their proposals of gender-sensitive indicators and will analyse their merits and drawbacks while interrogating whether these belated attempts to bring a gender perspective to monitoring the Paris Declaration are sufficient to address the indicator's gap in the aid effectiveness agenda.

#### **3.1.1. African Gender and Development Evaluators Network (AGDEN)**

In 2006, after a series of regional meetings and consultations on the new aid modalities in Africa, UNIFEM created an African expert group to interrogate new aid modalities. The purpose was for them to suggest ways in which gender equality could be achieved within

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<sup>28</sup> At the time of this partnership, UNIFEM was the United Nations Fund for Women. In 2011, the fund became part of the newly created entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women under the name 'UN Women'.

the new landscape of the Paris Declaration. Unlike the closed process led by the OECD for the Paris Declaration, the expert group embarked in an open, collective process that was to draw into the (subsequent) production of indicators a wide range of people, organisations, and agencies working towards gender equality.

In 2006, as a member of the expert group AGDEN – the African Gender and Development Evaluators Network – created a proposal for gender-sensitive indicators to assess aid effectiveness under the Paris Declaration’s framework. AGDEN is a membership organisation registered in Kenya composed of 107 members representing at least 18 countries, mostly in Africa but also including representatives from the UK, USA, and Canada. It is a bilingual (French and English) network of practitioners and leaders in gender, human rights and monitoring and evaluation who use rights-based approaches in their work. The proposal of gender-sensitive measures created by AGDEN provided a large set of indicators, totalling 38, meant to be used by countries in a flexible manner. The indicators were presented at a handful of international fora, namely the Africa regional preparatory meeting for the third High Level Summit on Aid Effectiveness in Kigali, Rwanda; the CSO preparatory meetings of the 3rd High Level Summit on Aid Effectiveness in Accra Ghana in September 2007; the African Women’s Regional Consultative Meeting on Aid Effectiveness and Gender Equality in Nairobi in 2008; and the 6th GENDERNET meeting at the OECD headquarters in Paris in 2008. For each of the 12 Paris Declaration indicators, AGDEN suggests between one and four gender-sensitive indicators. The reason for this high number is ‘to give users the freedom for experimentation to try possible indicators so as to ascertain their evaluability or measurability in order to efface some of the problems identified with other measures’ (Etta, 2009). According to AGDEN, some of the indicators still require more work and polishing. AGDEN believes that ‘the widespread use and trial of these indicators by evaluators and researchers will make them better, useful, useable and popular – more than some of the current instruments used in the Paris Declaration monitoring and evaluation surveys’ (Etta, 2009). The indicators they suggested are as follows:



Current Paris Declaration Principle and Indicator Number		Gender-sensitive Indicators by AGDEN
1	Ownership Operational development strategies with strategic priorities linked to a medium – term expenditure framework and reflected in annual budgets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Percentage of participation of men and women in the development of national plans and strategies</li> <li>- Percentage representation of women and poor women and men’s interests in national plans and strategies</li> </ul>
2a	Alignment Quality of public finance management systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Degree of Gender responsiveness of Country financial systems</li> <li>- Degree of Reform of Country Procurement systems to reflect gender sensitivity if /where need is proven</li> <li>- Presence of national gender budgeting efforts</li> <li>- Percentage of gender analysed national (or sectoral) budgets</li> </ul>
2b	Quality of procurement systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality of gender sensitivity of Country Procurement systems</li> <li>- Gender responsive reviews of Country procurement systems</li> <li>- Percentage of gender analysed national expenditures</li> </ul>
3	Aid flows reported on national budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Percentage of aid flows with strategic gender equality objectives reported in national budget reviews/reports</li> <li>- Percentage of aid flows which support gender equality objectives (extra budgetary) reported.</li> <li>- Quantity of aid flows channelled to gender-sensitive sectors reported as a proportion of those to other sectors</li> </ul>
4	Co-ordinated capacity support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existence of a coordinated/national framework for capacity development of government functionaries in Gender and Development</li> <li>- Quality of capacity-development support provided to gender equality and women’s groups, gender equality advocates and national women’s machineries</li> </ul>
5a	Use of country procurement systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ease/difficulty of use of procurement systems in support of gender equality programming</li> <li>- Degree of understanding of ease/difficulty of procurement systems by gender equality programmers</li> </ul>

Current Paris Declaration Principle and Indicator Number		Gender-sensitive Indicators by AGDEN
5b	Use of country public financial management system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ease/difficulty of use of public management systems for gender equality programming at national, provincial, local government, city levels</li> <li>- Degree of understanding of public management systems by gender equality programmers at all levels</li> </ul>
6	Parallel Implementation Units (PIUs)	- Percentage use of PIUs for gender equality programming as a proportion of PIUs for other aid
7	Aid predictability	Percent of aid disbursed for gender equality work released according to agreed schedules in annual or multi-year frameworks as a percentage of other/overall aid to country
8	Untied Aid	Percent/proportion of bilateral, multilateral or other aid tied to women's rights and gender equality conditionality as a percentage of aid with OTHER conditionalities
9	Harmonisation – Use of programme based approaches (PBA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number and types of PBA arrangements in country</li> <li>- Number and types of sectors in country using PBAs.</li> <li>- Proportion of aid in GE PBAs as a percentage of overall PBAs in other programme areas or sectors.</li> <li>- Number and quality of programmes supporting women's human rights and gender equality programming in country</li> <li>- Number and type of sectors in which projects supporting women's human rights and gender equality are found</li> </ul>
10	Joint missions and country analytic work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nature of collaboration among key development agencies and national government in the development of joint national gender equality strategies</li> <li>- Existence of Joint assessments/country analytic work in GE</li> <li>- Degree of involvement of gender advocates and women's organisations in Joint assessments/country analytic work.</li> </ul>
11	Managing for results – Performance/ results oriented frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existence of performance assessment frameworks for national strategies sensitive to GE i.e. with gender-sensitive indicators</li> <li>- Number and quality of CEDAW related indicators included in national/sector Performance assessment frameworks</li> <li>- Number and types (quality) of implementation reports prepared and disseminated on CEDAW, BPFA, and gender equality as stand alone or reflected in national strategy reports presented to parliament or the general taxpaying public</li> </ul>



Current Paris Declaration Principle and Indicator Number		Gender-sensitive Indicators by AGDEN
12	Mutual Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partner countries undertake mutual assessment of progress</li> <li>- Number and quality of timed reviews/assessment of progress in the implementation of agreed gender equality and women's human rights commitments</li> <li>- Degree of involvement by gender advocate, women's rights activists, and CSOs in the timed reviews and assessment of progress in the implementation of agreed gender equality and women's human rights commitments</li> <li>- Degree, quality and regularity of CSO involvement in performance monitoring and reporting of Aid Effectiveness for gender equality.</li> <li>- The existence of parliamentary mandates for requesting and receiving vertical and horizontal monitoring, evaluation and performance reports of Aid Effectiveness for gender equality by governments, donors and NGOs.</li> </ul>

These indicators proposed by AGDEN contain a diversity of possibilities to measure for gender in each of the 5 principles of the Paris Declaration (ownership, alignment, harmonisation, mutual accountability and managing for results). It is notable that ADGEN's indicators are very detailed and many, something that (according to the Vice-Chair of AGDEN's Board) has been criticised by some (Etta, 2009). The main issue with a multiplicity of indicators related to concerns that the measuring exercise will be too complex and hard to manage. Some of the indicators are identified as very specific at tackling sensitive aspects such as aid predictability, untied aid, and other areas where power relations can heavily influence outcomes (Etta, 2009). By doing so, plenty of substantial information can be collected regarding some of the deeper obstacles to aid effectiveness. The detailed nature of these indicators also amount to an opportunity to identify where capacity building efforts are needed, especially around collecting data and could well incentivise users to collect such data (Etta, 2009). AGDEN's indicators reveal a detailed understanding of the technical and non-technical specificities, and complexities behind measuring gender equality in aid effectiveness. They are unique in mentioning the inclusion of poor men and women's interests in national development plans, and in specifically naming the existence of 'parliamentary mandates for requesting and receiving vertical and horizontal information about aid effectiveness for gender equality by governments, donors and

International NGOs' as an indicator of mutual accountability (see table above under the principle of mutual accountability). By doing so, they centre importance of democratic, inclusive processes and transparency as desirable features of gender-sensitive measures. They are also unique in grounding the implementation reports (Managing for Results) on CEDAW and the Beijing Platform of Action, both of which retain the complexity of gender equality, and are legally binding. In the case of CEDAW it is monitored continuously, at least every 4 years.<sup>29</sup>

AGDEN's work lies outside the formal proceedings of the aid effectiveness agenda and the indicators have not been formally endorsed by any of the international bodies or by individual countries. Produced as result of large regional consultations, they were recommended to UN Women, and not necessarily conceived with the expectation of becoming official. However, AGDEN's indicators helped inform both the EC/UN Partnership and GENDERNET's approaches to indicators (Kaabunga and Etta, 2013). It is unlikely that the indicators, as conceptualised by AGDEN, be used in a widespread manner by governments though they could prove useful to gender advocates monitoring aid effectiveness in their respective countries and to their advocacy efforts (if they are disseminated adequately).

### **3.1.2. EC/UN Partnership for Development and Peace**

In 2008, the European Commission and two UN bodies, International Labour Organisation and UNIFEM, launched a partnership project known as the EC/UN Partnership for Peace and Development. They published a set of gender-sensitive indicators against which to measure the current principles outlined in the Paris Declaration to be used on a *voluntary* basis. They are part of a broader initiative, which began in 2005, to identify approaches with which to integrate gender equality and women's human rights into new aid modalities, in accordance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.<sup>30</sup> This was a pilot project involving 12 countries which were selected by the partnership on the basis of their

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<sup>29</sup> Countries that have ratified or signed CEDAW are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. They are also committed to submit national reports, at least every four years, on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations.

<sup>30</sup> It was as part of this effort that AGDEN was commissioned by UNIFEM to produce the work highlighted above.



commitment and capacity to account for gender equality.<sup>31</sup> The pilot projects, as per the description on the website, also aims 'to provide support for national partners' efforts to fulfil international obligations on gender equality and to match their commitment on same with adequate financial allocations in national development programmes and budgets' ([www.gendermatters.eu](http://www.gendermatters.eu)). In addition, the project, which builds on a history of consultations held in Africa and Asia, 'aims to focus on the role of women in conflict and post-conflict situations, and especially in the proper implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325' ([www.gendermatters.eu](http://www.gendermatters.eu)). Five strategies underpin the EC/UN Partnership project:<sup>32</sup>

1. *Knowledge generation*: mapping national priorities and budgeting processes to identify opportunities and challenges for incorporating gender equality into all 12 pilot countries.
2. *Capacity building*: enabling national stakeholders and development partners, especially the EC in the pilot countries, to incorporate gender equality and women's human rights more fully into national development plans, country strategy papers, budgets, programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation. A global gender help desk was set up to provide technical assistance.
3. *Information sharing*: setting up an interactive project website, documenting best practices and lessons learnt, and disseminating those documents at various forums.
4. *Advocacy*: making attention to gender equality and women's human rights part of the aid effectiveness agendas of all development partners in the lead-up to the Accra review in 2008 and beyond.
5. *Partnership building*: creating coalitions and networks of gender equality advocates that can work together to develop key messages for advocacy at national, regional and global levels.

The indicators of the EC/ UN Partnership are as follows:

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<sup>31</sup> The pilot countries were: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Suriname and Ukraine.

<sup>32</sup> The description that follows is reproduced from the partnership's website [www.gendermatters.eu](http://www.gendermatters.eu)

<b>Paris Declaration Principle</b>	<b>EC/UN Partnership suggested gender-sensitive indicators</b>
<b>1. Ownership</b>	<p>1.1 Countries evaluated in 2010 have institutional structures in place which allow systematic participation of civil society and women’s groups in national development planning (including the formulation of Poverty Reduction Strategic Papers – PRSPs) implementation and monitoring.</p> <p>1.2 National Development Strategies and PRSPs developed up to 2010 integrate a gender analysis of poverty consistently supported by sex-disaggregated data, and reference to national commitments to international agreements such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action.</p> <p>1.3 National gender equality priorities/ plans are costed, supported by action plans and integrated into national development strategies and PRSPs.</p>
<b>2–3. Alignment and Harmonisation</b>	<p>2.1 Donor and partner countries evaluated in 2010 have gender responsive budgeting systems in place at national and local levels.</p> <p>2.2 Percentage of donor funds dedicated to capacity building on mainstreaming gender perspectives in public finances for Finance Ministry officials, line ministries, civil society (and particularly women’s organizations) and Parliamentarians.</p> <p>2.3 Percentage of public/donor funding for meeting gender-specific goals, for example, ending violence against women and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment.</p>
<b>4-5. Managing for results and Mutual Accountability</b>	<p>3.1 The 2010 Evaluation of implementation of the Paris Declaration include systematic involvement from civil society and women’s organizations.</p> <p>3.2 At least three gender-sensitive indicators are assessed during formal aid effectiveness monitoring and evaluation processes.</p> <p>3.3 Performance assessment frameworks of donors include gender equality as a key result and include systematic involvement from civil society and women’s organisations.</p> <p>3.4 Percentage of aid dedicated for harmonized systems for joint government/ donor capacity building on mainstreaming gender equality in programme-based approaches in place at country level.</p>

The EC/UN Partnership indicators address each of the 5 Paris Declaration principles and name gender equality and women’s empowerment as specific goals that each principle should account for. The larger project provides extended supports to governments, women’s organisations, and gender advocates at the national level specifically to build their own capacity in the technical aspects of measuring for gender equality (such as gender



budgeting) and measuring for gender specific goals. Women's participation in the various mechanisms and processes is strongly promoted by some of the indicators. Women's participation is not limited to their input in the process of evaluation and monitoring but the indicators provide for the sustained engagement of women's advocates with aid effectiveness by encouraging their capacity building to shadow report, monitor, etc. The EC/UN Project and its indicators aim to build networks and partnerships focused on gender to assist in advocacy efforts for inclusion of gender in aid effectiveness. As with AGDEN's proposal, the Beijing Platform of Action and CEDAW are featured in the indicators as anchors to human rights. As CEDAW involves an ongoing monitoring and reporting process, this allows for checking on progress on gender equality specifically in all other areas addressed by the convention. The pilot project officially ended in 2010 and, at the time of this writing, it is unclear whether there has been any further continuity at the level of individual countries.

### **3.1.3. GENDERNET (the OECD/DAC Network on Gender Equality)**

In 2008, following the Accra review meeting, GENDERNET developed the 'Guiding Principles for Aid Effectiveness, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment'. GENDERNET also developed a module to provide a gender equality dimension to the progress being tracked by the 2011 Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration of November that year (GENDERNET, 2011a). This was a strategy proposed in the Guiding Principles to develop 'qualitative and quantitative gender equality indicators to measure progress towards challenging commitments such as country ownership' (OECD/ DAC, 2008, point 13). These indicators are meant to supplement the existing indicators outlined in the Paris Declaration and are to be used on a voluntary basis. They were *not* intended to provide a comprehensive tool for tracking progress against the Paris Declaration but rather 'to offer an exploratory framework for countries to make linkages between gender equality and aid effectiveness' (GENDERNET, 2011a: 30). There are 3 indicators in total and each is accompanied by a questionnaire asking 5-6 qualitative questions specific to each indicator. A final self-assessment score indicator is also included. The score indicator is based on the LEADS methodology.<sup>33</sup> The three GENDERNET indicators are as follows:

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<sup>33</sup> The LEADS methodology tracks where Little action has been taken, where elements exist, where action has been taken, where the action is fully developed, and where an action is sustainable.

Paris Declaration indicator	GENDERNET Gender Equality indicator	Questions from the Optional Module used to assess this indicator
Ownership	Gender Equality and women's empowerment are grounded in a systematic manner in national development strategies	<p>Q1. Basic information: Describe to what extent gender equality is addressed in the national development strategy (NDP)/ Poverty Reduction Strategy paper (PRSP), and in sector and sub-regional strategies.</p> <p>Q2. Unified Strategy Framework: Describe to what extent gender equality and women's empowerment objectives are part of the long-term vision that underpins the latest NDP.</p> <p>Q3. Prioritisation: Describe the linkages between the objectives/targets of the NDP/ PRSP and gender equality and women's empowerment.</p> <p>Q4. Strategic Link to the budget: Set out whether a specific budget is allocated to gender equality and women's empowerment objectives, and identify the sectors/ programmes. Also describe whether gender equality perspectives have been integrated into public financial management, through a gender-responsive budgeting.</p> <p>Q5. Describe the extent to which donors' development policies and programmes are designed and implemented at the country level in ways consistent with agreed international commitments on gender equality (in line with AAA para. 13c).</p> <p>Q6. Describe and give examples of how donors are equipped (specialist staff, tools, etc) to support the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment in programme design and implementation.</p> <p><u>Self assessment:</u></p> <p>Q1. Based on the responses provided above, suggest a score indicator based on LEADS methodology</p> <p>Q2. Have the replies and the score been discussed with the developing partner country</p>



Paris Declaration indicator	GENDERNET Gender Equality indicator	Questions from the Optional Module used to assess this indicator
		government, civil society and parliamentarians?
Managing for Results	Data is disaggregated by sex (managing for gender equality results)	<p>Q1. Describe to what extent the data collected for the national development strategy's monitoring and evaluation framework are systematically disaggregated by sex, and whether these data are timely, relevant and comprehensive</p> <p>Q2. Describe extent to which sex disaggregated data are analysed and used for decision-making</p> <p>Q3. Describe to what extent data is disseminated to the public</p> <p>Q4. Describe to what extent donors support the development of national capacities for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data disaggregated by sex</p> <p>Q5. Describe to what extent data disaggregated by sex is used in donor decision-making, allocation and programming processes</p> <p><u>Self-assessment:</u></p> <p>Q1. Based on the responses provided above, suggest a score indicator based on LEADS methodology</p> <p>Q2. Have the replies and the score been discussed with the developing partner country government, civil society and parliamentarians?</p>

Paris Declaration indicator	GENDERNET Gender Equality indicator	Questions from the Optional Module used to assess this indicator
Mutual Accountability	Mutual accountability for gender and women's empowerment	<p>Q1. Is progress on national, regional and international commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment addressed in mutual assessment reviews? Please provide brief motivation for your reply.</p> <p>Q2. Are representatives from the Ministry in charge of gender equality and gender equality focal points from line ministries, as well as representatives from civil society, systematically involved in mutual review processes? Please provide a brief motivation for your reply.</p>

The development of the Guiding Principles for Aid Effectiveness, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment as well as of the Optional Module on Gender Equality demonstrates that considerable capacity exists within the OECD on gender. The fact that such expertise was not utilised in devising the Paris Declaration as part of a gender mainstreaming strategy, as was already pointed out in the background chapter, demonstrates: (1) a lack of alignment with international agreements such as CEDAW in OECD's own work, and (2) absence of gender mainstreaming practices in the OECD itself. Ironically, alignment with international agreements is probed in one of the questions of the questionnaire corresponding to the principle of ownership.<sup>34</sup> The fact that the module is only voluntary and supplementary to the Monitoring Survey of the Paris Declaration demonstrates that while the institutional capacity to generate gender analysis exists, the political will to make gender equality a matter of *priority* is missing within the OECD. This is not to say that highlighting the gender issues and disparities in the Monitoring Survey isn't important. In fact, the Module's findings constitute an important and solid contribution to the survey and have the potential to significantly politicise the future processes towards development effectiveness if the findings are taken into account in decision-making.

<sup>34</sup> See table of GENDERNET indicators above: question 5 of questionnaire



Making gender equality and women's empowerment an 'add on' and a 'voluntary' aspect of aid effectiveness contributes to the perception that these issues are separate from 'the real agenda', that they are unimportant and do not need to be taken seriously. While the OECD is technically not in a position to dictate to states on these matters, it does have the clout to gather the political will for endorsing a stronger agenda with gender equality, women's empowerment and environmental sustainability as a core part of aid effectiveness. The Accra Agenda for Action, as already discussed, is a step in the right direction but remains an insufficient means to address these issues.

It is noticeable that GENDERNET provides with indicators to measure for only 3 (out of 5) Paris Declaration principles (see table below). The principles that were left unaddressed, alignment and harmonisation, contain 9 out of the 12 indicators of the Paris Declaration. These two principles can be described as important sites of power and friction between those operationalizing the commitments. The activities inherent to operationalizing 'alignment' and 'harmonisation' involve a high degree of interaction and joint work between a range of civil servants and administrators of both donors and aid recipient countries. Some of the activities include: policy dialogues, diagnostic reviews, capacity development efforts, establishing mutually agreed frameworks for assessing performance, transparency and accountability of country systems, and more. The expectation is that those working together (typically expats and officials from donor countries and local officials from recipient countries) will agree on the creation of standards, will develop processes, monitor implementation, share analysis and feedback, and problem solve. Such processes are filled with power relations where donors have historically had the upper hand (see Mc Laghlan et al, 2010 for a deeper exploration of this particular).

Considering the participatory nature of much gender-related work, it is puzzling that the indicators of GENDERNET do not specifically probe into the involvement and participation of women either in the monitoring process itself or in the conceptualisation of national development plans (though this is not discouraged either). Rather, the assumption underlying these gender indicators is that they will be used solely by a designated official (who may or may not have the opportunity or power to carry out a participatory process involving women). It is also important to keep in mind that the exercise is part of a bureaucratic process to supplement information for a survey, gathering data about the

state of affairs in the given country and not necessarily trying to guide how gender should be incorporated in the principles, which is presumably the realm of Guiding Principles for Aid Effectiveness, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment produced by GENDERNET.

<b>Principles of the Paris Declaration addressed by each group</b>			
<b>PD Indicator</b>	<b>OECD/ DAC GENDERNET</b>	<b>EC/UN Partnership on Development and Peace</b>	<b>AGDEN</b>
1. Ownership	X	X	X
2. Alignment		X	X
3. Harmonisation		X	X
4. Managing for Results	X	X	X
5. Mutual Accountability	X	X	X

It should be said, however, that despite the voluntary nature of the GENDERNET exercise with indicators, the fact that from the 78 countries participating in the Monitoring Survey, 24 contributed to both the Monitoring Survey and the Gender Equality Module demonstrates that measuring for gender equality and women's empowerment is seen as an important aspect of aid effectiveness by many such countries.<sup>35</sup> Seventeen African countries participated in the module, 4 Latin American, 2 eastern European and 1 Asian. Four of the countries that participated in the module also undertook the 2011 survey of the Principles of Good International Engagement and Fragile States and Situations. These latter principles were endorsed at the 2007 OECD/DAC High Level Meeting and reflect a growing consensus that fragile states require responses that are different from better performing countries.

<sup>35</sup> Participating countries were: Albania, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Gabon, Honduras, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Moldova, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Peru, Rwanda, Togo and Zambia.



### 3.2. Merits, limitations, and scope of current gender-sensitive proposals to engender the Paris Declaration

In charting the experience of women in institutions of hegemonic masculinity, Hartstock (1998) has argued for a feminist standpoint. A feminist standpoint is one that provides a critical perception of one's social location emerging out of a conscious struggle with dominant practices, which produces valuable knowledge about the structure and meaning of those practices. She argues that while men have epistemic authority due to their social position within these institutions, women have epistemic privilege, a specific complete knowledge as 'outsiders within' such institutional settings. Knowledge gained from charting the experience of women in institutions of hegemonic masculinity remains valuable to feminist politics because, as Hartstock has argued, a feminist standpoint provides a 'vantage point on male supremacy, a vantage point which can ground a powerful critique' of patriarchal institutions (Kronsell, 2005). While I do not wish to argue that the OECD and the UN are institutions of hegemonic masculinity, when applying this logic to the knowledge on indicators generated by the gender advocates working within the OECD (i.e. GENDERNET) and the UN system (the EC/ UN Partnership), or to use Sandler's term 'femocrats', the proposals to measure for gender in the Paris Declaration can be seen in a new light, a sort of feminist response/ creative resistance, to the patriarchal institutions and practices within which these gender advocates work.<sup>36</sup>

The process to arrive at gender-sensitive indicators began with the work of AGDEN, an organisation lying *outside* the formal institutional frameworks and dedicated to rights-based participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluation. From their particular standpoint as a network of practitioners in close contact with development issues and the communities that experience such issues, they constructed a set of indicators that reflect the diversity of systems, structures, dynamics and locations through which power is established and negotiated. AGDEN's indicators reflect a particular epistemic privilege obtained through critical engagement with both the development 'establishment' and communities as development practitioners. AGDEN's standpoint allowed them to reflect the complexity of measuring gender equality taking the needs of the communities into account, while also understanding the institutional dynamics involved in the shaping and

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<sup>36</sup> See Sandler 2014 for an analysis of the experiences of gender bureaucrats in the UN system.

using of indicators. The number and diverse nature of AGDEN's indicators reflect an understanding of these distinct realities and the need to apply and adapt different tools (the indicators) in different circumstances. Hence the higher number of indicators in their proposal.

The gender advocates working in each of the 3 groups mentioned above were all able to identify places for the inclusion of gender equality perspectives and goals (or spaces where they can be named) and gender analysis at various levels in a gender blind agenda. A closer look to the indicators (see table 2 above) reveal the reflection of key aspects of the GAD approach: *women's participation* (EU/UN Partnership and AGDEN), opportunities to account for *strategic interests* of the poor (AGDEN – through National Development Plans), enhancing opportunities for *access to resources* (GENDERNET, EU/UN Partnership and AGDEN – through gender budgeting), and for *influencing factors* such as accounting for the power relations embedded in any monitoring and measuring exercise (AGDEN in particular). In this way, these committed gender advocates who often operate in the fringes of their own organisations (GENDERNET) and of mainstream economic processes (GENDERNET, UNIFEM and the ILO) have been able to contribute to democratise and somehow humanise the technocratic approach to aid effectiveness embodied by the Paris Declaration even if in a limited way. This is particularly visible in the indicators produced by the EC/UN Partnership and AGDEN, which address all 5 principles of the Paris Declaration and contain many spaces for democratic participation. Gender budgeting is a consistent tool suggested and used strategically by all three initiatives (although indirectly by GENDERNET), which has often helped shape fiscal policies in some countries (see Khan, 2014).

When considering the Paris Declaration principles addressed by each proposal, it is noteworthy that the UN and AGDEN deal with all five principles while GENDERNET addresses three. GENDERNET's indicators, however, were not meant to engender the Paris Declaration principles but to supplement the monitoring survey conducted by the OECD. It is disappointing (and intriguing) that having produced the Guiding Principles for Aid Effectiveness, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment for all 5 Paris Declaration Principles, the OECD's GENDERNET limited their survey to three principles and that the exercise was supplementary to and not an inherent part of the survey. GENDERNET's



selection of principles (ownership, managing for results and mutual accountability) reflect the areas in which there is more opportunity to include tools for gender analysis (data disaggregated by sex and gender budgets) and for a degree of involvement of Women's Ministries and civil society (on ownership and mutual accountability although very vaguely worded). But not dealing with the sensitivities inherent to the principles of 'alignment' and 'harmonisation' leave the human power dynamics of fine tuning operational systems unaddressed. It is also notable that besides concentrating on 3 principles only, the wording used in the questionnaires is very vague and prone to be used as a 'tick the box' approach involving a minimal effort from the part of the countries involved. For example, 'discussing' the LEADS score with developing partner country government, civil society and parliamentarians does not amount to obtaining consent or their involvement in the formal process of planning and evaluation (see: ownership, self-assessment, question two of table above). Reducing the involvement of partner country government, civil society and parliamentarians to a number on the LEAD score further diminishes the paramount importance of these actors for the legitimacy of the process.

Further enquiries into the motives and reasons for GENDERNET's approach to indicators resulted in an unexpected finding: the Optional Module was itself an achievement. Before the High Level Forum in Accra (2008) these advocates of gender equality in GENDERNET had embarked in an internal consultation process (within the OECD and its members) to reach agreement on gender-sensitive indicators that could be used in the new aid architecture. A phone interview with senior staff of the GENDERNET Secretariat based in Paris revealed that such consultations did not result in consensus over any particular indicator, although support existed for the idea of including gender equality. To avoid the complete 'vanishing' of gender equality, the staff of GENDERNET's Secretariat proposed the Optional Module as a way of circumventing disagreements – a non-threatening strategy that could secure a place for gender equality in aid effectiveness. Simultaneously, the Optional Module could also serve as a 'diagnostic tool' to gather data on countries' approaches to gender equality. By doing so, GENDERNET ensured it had sufficient country data to inform future strategies on gender equality (phone interview, 26 February, 2014). The same interview also revealed that leaving the principles of harmonisation and alignment unaddressed was not coincidental. They were not seen to engage well with gender equality (interview, 26 February, 2014). The focus on the three principles

(ownership, managing for results and mutual accountability) was a deliberate and strategic choice of GENDERNET as was the choice of language emphasising 'women's empowerment' in the principle of ownership (interview, 26 February, 2014). The term resonates with those in the OECD who have historically favoured 'economic empowerment' where women can easily fit into the existing economic model. Similarly, this term is equally appealing to those favouring human rights based approaches to gender equality (although for different reasons). But above all, the term plays well into the bureaucratic apparatus of the organisation, the main focus of which is to promote 'economic cooperation and development' (interview, 26 February, 2014). This unexpected finding raises interesting questions around the role of feminist bureaucrats inside international development organisations, the constraints they face, as well as the tactics and strategies they use to further gender equality goals from within their institutions (see Eyben, 2010b and 2012, and Sandler 2014 for an interesting analysis on this subject).

While it is understood that the OECD might not want to be seen as imposing directives to its members and that the optional module is better than just leaving gender out of the table, the fact that the Gender Equality module is described as an 'exploratory framework for countries to make linkages between gender equality and aid effectiveness' (GENDERNET, 2011a) does have the effect of robbing gender equality from being treated as an integral part of the aid effectiveness efforts. This approach, strategic as it can be, only helps perpetuate the notion that gender equality is not important enough and marginal to poverty reduction and to aid effectiveness. Additionally, regardless of how gender-sensitive these 3 proposals of indicators are, they do not escape that the Paris Declaration itself is tied to the problematic neoliberal framework for effectiveness established in the Monterrey Consensus. As seen in the first chapter, space for human rights, environmental sustainability and gender equality in that framework is confined to an economic efficiency-based approach to development.

The above mentioned gender-sensitive indicators in this way correspond to an 'integrationist approach' to gender mainstreaming. An integrationist approach is one where women's and gender concerns are brought into existing policies and programmes focusing in *adapting* institutional procedures to achieve gender equality and without transforming the development agenda itself (Reeves and Baden, 2000). Thus, the



discussion above reveals that engendering the Paris Declaration is partly possible in terms of *making its management systems and operational strategies* more complete. But while the proposals contain important insights into the elements of a gender-sensitive approach to measuring aid effectiveness, they do not deal with orienting the aid effectiveness agenda with sufficient weight towards the achievement of development goals. Exceptionally, AGDEN's indicators do contain opportunities to measure the inclusion of programmes supporting women's human rights and gender equality programming in country and the number and type of sectors in which projects supporting women's human rights and gender equality are found (under harmonisation). AGDEN's indicators also pose a challenge to the neoliberal rationale of the aid agenda when they require CEDAW and the BPfA as grounding implementation reports.

In various degrees these three proposals did present important opportunities to mobilise participating countries towards accounting for gender equality in aid effectiveness.<sup>37</sup> The work of the gender equality advocates shaping these three initiatives reveal what Campbell and Teghtsoonian refer to as 'transformative impulses translated into integrative practices' (Campbell and Teghtsoonian, 2010: 181). The voluntary nature of these initiatives and their belated inclusion in aid effectiveness did not challenge or re-orient the aid effectiveness agenda towards human development goals.

In this respect, we shall now turn to exploring the human development aspect that aid is supposed to help accelerate. The human development paradigm, Amartya Sen's work on the human capabilities approach to development and the Human Development Index will be examined. The exercise will consider the extent to which these frameworks provide the basis to re-orient aid effectiveness / development effectiveness, and especially its indicators, towards development goals in a gender-sensitive manner.

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<sup>37</sup> Details about the impact of the EC/ UN Partnership project at the country level can be found in the Partnership's website ([gendermatters.eu](http://gendermatters.eu)). For information on the Findings of the Gender Equality Optional Module of the 2011 Paris Declaration Monitoring Survey (GENDERNET) see: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/49014760.pdf>.

### 3.3. Alternative Frameworks to Engender Aid/ Development Effectiveness

#### 3.3.1. Human Development Paradigm Approach

In 1990, right after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the formal end of the cold war, a new discourse/ paradigm of human development was introduced by the first Human Development Report (HDR). 'The basic objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives' (HDR, 1990: 9). The explicit purpose of the report was to 'shift the focus of development economics from national income accounting to people- centred policies' (Mahbub ul Haq in Fukuda-Parr, 2003: 302).

Technical considerations of the means to achieve human development – and the use of statistical aggregates to measure national income and growth – have at times obscured the fact that the primary objective of development is to benefit people... But excessive preoccupation with GNP growth and national income accounts has obscured that powerful perspective, supplanting a focus on ends by an obsession with merely the means. (UNDP, 1990, chapter 1: 9)

The Human Development Report 1990 went on to define a new vision of human development:

Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices. In principle, these choices can be infinite and change over time. But at all levels of development, the three essential ones are for people to lead a long and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. If these essential choices are not available, many other opportunities remain inaccessible. (UNDP, 1990: 10)

The approach to human development popularised by and developed through the Human Development Reports stems from Amartya Sen's theory of development as an expansion of capabilities, and the work of Mahbub ul Haq on the human development paradigm (Fukuda-Parr, 2003). Sen suggested that by expanding the range of things that a person can *be* and *do* human lives can be improved (e.g. to be healthy and well nourished, to be knowledgeable, to participate in community life, etc).

There are two central theses distinguishable in the human development approach. The first is what Sen termed the 'evaluative aspect' concerned with evaluating improvements in human lives as an explicit development objective. This one uses human achievements as



key indicators of progress and is distinct from a focus on economic growth. The second thesis is the 'agency aspect' concerned with what human beings can do to achieve such improvements, particularly through policy and political changes. Both of these thesis contrasts with the approach to development seen in the Paris Declaration where references to human development are absent, and the effectiveness of aid is reduced to its efficiency management.

### 3.3.2. The Human Development Index and Gender Indices

Corresponding to the evaluative thesis the HDR 1990 constructed (and subsequently refined) the Human Development Index (HDI).<sup>38</sup> The index accounts for *longevity* as measured by life expectancy at birth, *knowledge* as measured by a weighted average of adult literacy (two thirds) and mean years of schooling (one third), and *standard of living* as measured by real per capita gross domestic product, adjusted for the differing purchasing power parity of each country's currency to reflect cost of living, and for the assumption of diminishing marginal utility of income (Todaro and Smith, 2009).

The Human Development Index enjoyed great acceptance amongst the international community and has really changed the way much of development is conceptualised. Klugman, Rodriguez, and Choi (2011) pointed out that according to the *New York Times*, the HDI is the only one measure that has succeeded in challenging the hegemony of growth-centric thinking. They point that comparative data from internet searches show that the HDR does far better than its competitor (the World Bank's World Development Report) in terms of Google searches, and also in terms of academic citations.

But the intent of the human development approach was never to be confined in the HDI. The concept of human development being promoted through the HDRs is much more complex and broader than its measure. It is about people being able to live in freedom and dignity, and being able to exercise choices to pursue a full and creative life (Fukuda-Parr, 2003: 307). 'Human development is the expansion of people's freedoms to lead lives that

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<sup>38</sup> The process to decide which aspects needed inclusion in the new measurement of human development was not an easy one. An account of the dilemmas and rationale for choosing the elements composing the Human Development Index can be found in Fukuda-Parr and Shiva Kumar, 2005.

they value and have reason to value. Freedoms and capabilities are a more expansive notion than basic needs' (HDR, 2011). Over the years, the HDR has explored a range of human development aspects dealing with the challenges identified for given times.

The following table illustrates how the concept of human development has evolved in the Human Development Reports:

<b>Evolution of Human Development Reports</b>	
1990	Concept and measurement of human development
1991	Financing Human development
1992	Global dimensions of human development
1993	People's participation
1994	New dimensions of human security
<b>1995</b>	<b>Gender and human development</b>
1996	Economic growth and human development
1997	Human development to eradicate poverty
1998	Consumption for human development
1999	Globalization with a human face
2000	Human rights and human development
2001	Making new technologies work for human development
2002	Deepening democracy in a fragmented world
2003	MDGs: A compact among nations to end human poverty
2004	Cultural liberty in today's diverse world
2005	International cooperation at a crossroads: aid trade and security in an unequal world
2006	Beyond scarcity: power, poverty and the global water crisis
2007/08	Fighting climate change: human solidarity in a divided world
2009	Overcoming barriers: human mobility and development
<b>2010</b>	<b>The real wealth of nations: pathways to human development</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>Sustainability and equity: a better future for all</b>
2013	The rise of the south: human progress in a diverse world

Three notable examples of the evolution and change in prioritisation of capabilities over time are those of the recognition of the importance of gender equality for human development highlighted in HDR 1995 and more recently in HDRs 2010 and 2011.



In 1995, the year of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the Human Development Report entitled 'Gender and Human Development' concluded that 'human development is endangered unless it is engendered.' By 2001, the definition of human development had changed slightly. That year's Human Development Report stated:

The most basic capabilities for human development are to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community. (quoted in Fukuda-Parr, 2003: 308)

And in emphasizing the freedom to choose, the 1995 HDR specifically recognised the injustice of gender inequality:

Human development is a process of enlarging the choices of all people, not just for one part of society. Such a process becomes unjust and discriminatory if most women are excluded from its benefits. (quoted in Fukuda-Parr, 2003: 308)

It was in this context that the 1995 report went on to introduce the two new dimensions to the HDI to capture inequalities based on gender, the Gender and Development Index and the Gender Empowerment Measure.

The GDI concentrated on the same variables as the HDI but focused on inequality between men and women as well as on the average achievement of all people taken together. The GDI was to be used together with the HDI and was not an independent measure of gender inequality. The idea behind GDI was to 'penalize' the HDI if gender inequality was present in any of the three dimensions incorporated in the HDI. The larger the gap between men and women in achievements of life expectancy, education and income, the more the GDI differed from the HDI. Thus, the GDI was to be interpreted as the HDI discounted for gender disparities in its components, presenting a numeric loss of achievement and not to be interpreted as an independent index from HDI. GDI was often misused and misinterpreted as a measure of gender inequality in and on itself (Schüler, 2006).

The Gender Empowerment Measure measured inequality between men and women in terms of opportunity. It combined inequalities in three areas: political participation and decision making, economic participation and decision making, and power over economic resources. The GEM was meant to be interpreted as an index of gender equity in political

and economic participation and decision-making as well as power over economic resources. However, due to a computational misspecification, it could not be interpreted as such. To be such a measure, the income component would have to be based on income shares not on income levels (Schüler, 2006).

Building on the recognition of the issues posed by GDI and GEM and keeping focus on the multidimensional nature of poverty and inequalities, the HDR 2010, entitled: 'The real wealth of nations: pathways to human development' introduced yet another gender-related measure, the Gender Inequality Index (GII), meant to replace both the GDI and the GEM.<sup>39</sup> The GI will be discussed further below.

The third notable report is that of 2011, 'Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All', which emphasized the link between gender equality and sustainability. The report explores the intersections between environmental sustainability and equity, which are essentially related in their concern for distributive justice. It stresses that 'inequalities are especially unjust when particular groups, whether because of gender, race or birthplace, are *systematically disadvantaged*' (HDR, 2011: 1, emphasis mine).

The Human Development Reports have thus argued that the capabilities given priority within public policy can change over time. They have also argued that capabilities given priority can change from one community to another (Fukuda-Parr, 2003). This argument is attractive in the context of aid effectiveness as it does imply there is scope and opportunity in the human development paradigm for measures to be specific to both purpose and locality. Gender equality and human rights' goals in particular localities and groups receiving aid could benefit from this approach. This possibility also opens questions about the need and usefulness of global indicators: are they viable given the worlds' human diversity and the diversity of human needs? What purpose do global indicators serve? Who are these global indicators for? What will they help do? What exactly should be measured and whose interests will be served if these indices are in place?

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<sup>39</sup> The HDR 2010 also introduced 2 other measures: 1) the Inequality adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) to capture the losses in human development due to inequality in health, education and income, and 2) the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) identifying overlapping deprivations suffered by households in health, education and living standards.



### 3.3.2.1. Critical perspectives on the HDI

There are a number of notable conceptual and practical issues regarding the rationale behind HDI, its dimensions and composition. These are succinctly captured by a literature review carried by Raworth and Stewart (2002). Many of the issue areas have been addressed and/or are reflected in subsequent Human Development Reports. While these issues are important for the overall assessment of HDI, this section will remain focused on the gender-related critique.

HDI is supposed to be based on human capabilities. Nussbaum (2003) famously noted that gender specific capabilities underpinning HDI are missing. While the validity of her critique has not been challenged in terms of the need to include gender dimension, the fact that she proposed a fixed set of capabilities has been met with scepticism as it sits uncomfortably in a paradigm that is deliberately supposed to be open ended, and for capabilities to vary over space and time (Fukuda-Parr, 2003). At the level of specific dimensions covered by HDI, one of the three components of the index is 'standard of living' which is calculated on the basis of GDP per capita income. As it was stated in chapter one, GDP is a gender blind index mined with contradictions which place value on many destructive activities that perpetuate the poverty/ inequality cycle. So in this way, HDI still carries the burden of GDP even if it does incorporate two other vital aspects of human development (longevity and knowledge).

Like GDP, the HDI is silent on issues of distribution by gender, income and occupation. HDI does not account for women's reproductive and care work, so the important aspects of subsistence production are still not counted. Difficulties around finding adequate, reliable and valid measures for these missing dimensions are cited as reason for not including them in the HDI. There are many problems with capturing what is seen as subjective ratings (for political freedom/ civil and political rights) and environmental status (no consensus as to what outcomes should be judged as desirable) using internationally comparable, legitimate and reliable data (Fukuda-Parr, 2005). The same concerns applied to the GDI and the GEM which, although valuable in capturing and naming important areas of gender-based inequalities, by virtue of their association to HDI the GDI and the GEM also carried the GDP assumption. More than 10 years after their introduction, neither the GDI nor the GEM had

the anticipated impact in terms of measuring and promoting a gender-sensitive development agenda (Klassen, 2006; Schüler, 2006). The Human Development Report of 2011 succinctly captured the key drawbacks of the GDI and the GEM as follows: 1) Both GDI and GEM combine absolute and relative achievements so a country with low absolute incomes scores poorly, even with perfect gender equity, 2) Extensive imputations were needed to fill in missing data.<sup>40</sup> For the relative income shares in both indices, more than three fourths of country estimates were partly imputed. This imputation was particularly problematic because income is the most important driver of the wedge between HDI and GDI, and 3) according to the Human Development Report of 2011, nearly all indicators in the GEM reflected an urban elite bias and use some indicators more relevant to developed countries. These problems, the report states, partly reflect severe data limitations, which still exist, but the new Gender Inequality Index is said to address the key criticisms (HDR, 2011: 90).

### 3.3.2.2. The Gender Inequality Index

The new Gender inequality Index is a composite measure reflecting inequality in achievements between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labour market. The index is meant to capture the loss of achievement in the three areas, within a country, due to gender inequality. Loss of achievement here implies using the male standard as the default reference and the 'loss' or gap is shown numerically in the index.

Dimensions of the Gender Inequality Index	
Reproductive health	Adolescent fertility
	Maternal mortality
Empowerment	Educational attainment (secondary level and above)
	Parliamentary representation
Labour market	Labour force participation

<sup>40</sup> Imputations are substitutions of some value for missing data (Dictionary of Finance and Investment, 2013). They are figures resulting from 'informed estimates' calculated on the basis of studies of similar situations to get to a figure that 'would have been' if adequate data existed.



According to the UNDP itself, the GII still faces serious data limitations, which constrain the choice of indicators. For example, the use of national parliamentary representation excludes participation at the local government level and elsewhere in community and public life. The labour market dimension lacks information on incomes and on unpaid work (and thus reproductive work, subsistence economy, care economy) which ends up perpetuating the undervaluing of these critical areas (Permanyer, 2013). The GII also misses other important dimensions, such as time use – the fact that many women have the additional burden of care giving and housekeeping, which cut into leisure time and increase stress and physical exhaustion. Asset ownership, gender-based violence and participation in community decision-making are also not captured, mainly due to limited data availability (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/gii/> accessed on 5 April 2013).<sup>41</sup>

The issue of data availability to capture the above mentioned areas continues to present a major obstacle in the creation of meaningful gender-sensitive indicators that are relevant, comprehensive and reliable. This, despite the commitments made back in 1995 under the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) which highlighted ‘the need for devising tracking systems and measures, including time use surveys, to account for women’s unpaid work, with care work and work performed in the subsistence economy’ (BPfA, 1995). Specifically, strategic objective H.3 of the BPfA calls to ‘generate and disseminate gender disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.’ This objective was devised to be fulfilled ‘by national, regional and international statistical services and relevant governmental and United Nations agencies, in cooperation with research and documentation organizations, in their respective areas of responsibility’ (BPfA, 1995). But the construction of indices keeps being dictated by data availability and not by that which needs to be measured, for which data is not generated in most countries.

In sum, while the gender-related indices introduced by UNDP meant to enrich the human development paradigm have progressively dealt with important dimensions of gender inequality, they have tended to capture a ‘state of difference’ (loss of achievement due to

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<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, the latest European Union Gender Equality Index designed specifically for the EU member states does capture ‘time use’ and, under satellite domains, it factors in ‘intersecting inequalities’ and ‘violence.’

gender inequality using the male standard as a norm) and still fail to reflect the unpaid work of reproduction, care and work of the subsistence economy performed largely by women. This is particularly problematic in the context of aid recipient countries, especially in those where large proportions of people are engaged in and depend on the subsistence economy and the reproductive/ care work performed by women. Echoing the Human Development Report of 1995 here, 'if full recognition is given to the need to account for non-market work, the implications for the way society is structured would be revolutionary' (HDR, 1995: 98) and so will the way that aid is conceptualised and measured.

### **3.3.3. What Gender-sensitive Indicators for Aid Effectiveness?**

Sen pointed that in deciding which capabilities are most important for the human development approach 'the task of specification must relate to the underlying motivation of the exercise as well as dealing with the social values involved' (Sen quoted in Fukuda-Parr, 2003: 305). If the underlying motivation of the exercise is to make aid more effective (using Easterly and Pfutze's definition<sup>42</sup>) it follows that the social values involved are those specific to the locality (and not the values of the donors). So again here the dilemma of using global indicators. Can global indicators be useful to measure something as specific to locality and purpose as what aid money should help achieve?

In the case of those localities where the vast majority of people receiving aid are engaged in the subsistence economy, to pick an example, the 'social values involved' that Sen speaks of are presumably linked to respect for environmental sustainability and to fostering the necessary capabilities to thrive in it. But even the most improved version of the gender-sensitive indicators, namely the GII, falls short from valuing those aspects. This raises questions about what concept of value, as well as whose values are shaping the development of indicators, and the adequacy of such indicators for the purpose at hand.

A feminist theory of value is useful here. Lee (2006) utilises and unites the notion of ecology and aestheticism. She points that in this unusual union lies the potential for a critical feminist political praxis capable of appreciating, not only the value of human life, but those

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<sup>42</sup> Aid effectiveness can be defined as the extent to which foreign aid dollars actually achieve their goals of reducing poverty, malnutrition, disease, and death (Easterly and Pfutze, 2008)



relationships upon which human and non human life depend. She further argues for the actions that foster respect for biodiversity and ecological stability are vital components of this praxis. Using this theoretical understanding, the gender equality–women’s rights–environmental sustainability nexus becomes more visible. Seen in this light, a locally defined set of values based on feminist epistemologies makes sense. Feminists have critiqued traditional epistemologies, such as those of the positivist tradition, for being specifically ‘male’ and have argued the existence of specifically ‘female’ epistemologies. They have asserted the significance and legitimacy of emotional, politically engaged, and particularistic ways of knowing characterised as ‘female’ and usually excluded from traditional knowledge generation (Kemp and Squires, 1997). With this in mind, I argue that engaging with ‘situated knowledges’ (Haraway, 1988) could set the direction of what may constitute specific enough gender-sensitive measure(s) of aid effectiveness. Situated knowledge, according Haraway, is that knowledge which is placed within a particular context (socio-economic, cultural, historic, intellectual, etc). Such situated knowledge is constituted by the multiple pieces of information that make a particular context or perspective. As such it constitutes a richer form of knowledge than absolute, reductionist, universalising types (Haraway, 1988). Further, as argued by Santos (2008) the epistemic diversity of the world is potentially infinite. As such, situated knowledges have the potential to open up new possibilities for transformation in contrast to universalising type epistemologies which favour ‘closing up’ to perceived truths (Walsh, 2007).

The subsistence economy scenario described above reveals a different level of analysis where local and not global indicators are needed to capture the context specific aspects of measuring effectiveness. Therefore, a tension between the need for global indicators and the values these serve, and the need for local ones to reflect the particularities of specific localities where aid money is invested becomes visible here.

My argument is that the Paris Declaration fails to measure what we treasure, gender indices within the system are flawed, and even gender indices outside the system have problems related to universalism. What effective aid means therefore needs to be explored at the local level. This will be the purpose of the next chapter which uses a case study to focus on aid effectiveness and gender in Nicaragua.

As it will be seen in the next chapter, the case study will not be limited to the use of the GII and the Paris Declaration indicators. It will use additional 'lenses' through which to explore how aid effectiveness is understood and implemented in a particular locality. The case will engage with three distinct scenarios of project and programme aid, as well as with the indicators established in the Paris Declaration, and the latest gender-sensitive global indicator proposed by UNDP-GII. The Gender Inequality Index, imperfect as it is, can be considered as the 'best available option' in terms of containing universally valued gender-sensitive capabilities. The case study should help provide a more grounded perspective to deal with the thesis hypothesis, and help answer the last research question, namely, could existing gender-related development indices, such as the Gender Inequality Index be useful in measuring aid effectiveness?



## Chapter 4. Research Findings

### 4.1. Introduction

The analysis provided in the previous chapter dealt with the empirical evidence provided by the three proposals for gender-sensitive indicators that emerged after the Paris Declaration was adopted in 2005. It concluded that while these proposals provided a step forward towards the incorporation of gender equality in the aid agenda, the voluntary approach to reporting on gender equality and the integrationist nature of these proposals did not provide a significant transformative change to the official aid effectiveness. In search for new alternatives, the chapter also took stock of existing indices developed under the human development paradigm which explicitly target gender and gender equality. These, it was noted, carry important methodological shortcomings, and are considerably narrow in focus. Despite this, the GII was identified as 'the best available' global gender-related index in development. It was also noted that in the exercise of developing indicators, the human development paradigm argues for measures to be purpose specific and to reflect the values of the communities involved. This chapter seeks to further explore this argument by offering a case study to investigate some of the different ways in which gender equality in aid effectiveness can be and has been understood and measured in Nicaragua. In so doing, the case study explores the tension between the need for global indicators of aid effectiveness and the need for local, context specific measures.

This chapter will begin by describing the research methods used for the case study. It will provide an overview of the purpose and reasons for choosing Nicaragua as the particular site for the analysis. A description of the logic and specificities of the case study will follow providing details about the particular projects and actors involved and information about the rationale and structure of the interviews that were conducted. Secondly, the chapter will move on to engage fully with the case study. It will begin by providing an overview of the context of Nicaragua's gender equality politics as well as of its history with aid. Then, the case study will interrogate how the aid effectiveness agenda was implemented in Nicaragua from 5 different perspectives: 1) using the indicators of the Paris Declaration, 2) by considering the Gender Inequality Index as a source of gender sensitivity for aid effectiveness, 3) by looking at project funded by the Canadian government involving the

Miskito indigenous community in Nicaragua, 4) by looking at a project funded by the British government in Nicaragua focused on women's Labour Rights, and 5) by looking at a joint programme between the MDG-Achievement Fund and the government of Nicaragua that promotes women's participation and gender budgets. All three examples are focused in different aspects of gender equality. While their scope varies and the cases are not directly comparable with one another, the intention is to illustrate and explore how they interpret, implement and measure gender equality in aid effectiveness differently. It should be noted that where the text uses quotations from the documentation or interviews held in Spanish, the entire quote in that language will be used followed by an English translation. This is to preserve the integrity of the message in its original language and for the benefit of potential bilingual readers of these languages.

#### **4.2. Research Method and Overview**

The case study will be explored using a mixed methods approach. Case studies are valuable in that they can provide multi-perspective analyses (Reinhartz, 1992). I use secondary data produced by a number of international organisations, the academic literature, newspapers (from Nicaragua, the UK and Canada) and material produced by civil society organisations, including websites. In addition, I use primary data from the semi-structured interviews. The case study itself is composed of several, distinct pieces that, like a patchwork quilt made of seemingly disjointed elements, can be combined to form a whole. Following Koelsch (2012), the case study explored here can be equated with a patchwork quilt in that 'it has multiple entryways for analysis, no necessary centre, and the ability to grow in multiple directions' (Koelsch, 2012: 823). However, the research questions do provide a way of centering the analysis and these will be guiding the discussion of the case in the analysis chapter. The goal is threefold: 1) to determine the adequacy and viability of Paris Declaration indicators to measure effectiveness for something as specific to locality and purpose as aid is, 2) to deal with the hypothesis highlighting the complexities of using global indicators (such as the GII) at the local (country) level in gender-sensitive ways and, 3) to identify elements of gender-sensitive measures that work well locally based on evidence from the projects. It is anticipated that the case will reveal new information about gender-sensitive ways of assessing effectiveness reflecting the specificities of the Nicaraguan



context thus enhancing our understanding of measuring of aid effectiveness in that country.

For the first part of the case dealing with the Paris Declaration indicators and the Gender Inequality Index, I draw on material from the OECD, the World Bank, UN Women, UNDP and other UN bodies. The data relevant to Nicaragua's scores and 'performance' in the Paris Declaration indicators was found in the official OECD Monitoring Survey of 2008. For understanding and interpretation of the scores, the World Bank's 2005 study 'Results-based National Development Strategies: Assessment and Challenges' was the main source of reference for it provides additional explanations of the scoring system. Information related to Nicaragua's positioning in the Gender Inequality Index was extracted from the UN Development Report 2013. In addition, I drew on the national development plan of Nicaragua, material from the government's websites and from Nicaraguan newspapers, the academic literature related to aid and gender equality in that country, and from additional scholarly work produced by independent research institutes in Nicaragua. For the second part of the case dealing with the projects and joint programme, I drew on primary data from conducting semi-structured interviews with the staff of the organisations under study. I also used the organisations' reports to their funders, the material these organisations generated, evaluation forms, funding application templates, and from assessments of the projects conducted by independent consultants. Reports related to funding trends in the region and on gender equality issues were consulted as were articles and material generated by development organisations working in the region. The material also includes policy documents and strategic plans on aid effectiveness generated by the UK and Canadian governments.

The reasons for choosing Nicaragua as the site of the case study are both practical and out of interest in the complex circumstances within which gender equality struggles are situated in that country. On the practical side, there is a sufficient amount of gender-related data on the subject of aid effectiveness for this county to make the research viable (though not without limitations). Data availability in terms of tracking aid and its effects, especially in matters of gender equality, has been a long term research constraint even beyond gender equality issues. Since Nicaragua participated in the EC/ UN Partnership project for Development and Peace (examined in the previous chapter) there are a number of valuable

132

resources on aid effectiveness and gender equality that are not normally available for most countries. These resources are specialised mapping studies and reports produced by members of the EC/UN Partnership and which are publicly available online. Given that my first language is Spanish, I have been able to take advantage of a greater range of resources to inform the research. This additional access to resources has greatly enhanced my perspectives on the topic.

My personal interest in choosing Nicaragua for the present study lies in the unique socio-political trajectory of that country in terms of gender equality, and the particular context of its development cooperation and aid landscape. It can be said that Nicaragua is a post-conflict society which has veered to the left in recent times as a response to neoliberal globalization.<sup>43</sup> Nicaragua has a well known export processing zone in which gender equality issues such as women's labour exploitation and violence against women are high. Presumably, gender issues are high in the aid agenda. While a disproportionate number of women in Nicaragua face very serious issues with the patriarchal model (femicide, high maternal mortality, violence against women, amongst others) these issues don't affect all women in the same way. Indigenous women are particularly vulnerable and so are Afro-descendants. Women based in the cities and those based in the country side also deal with substantial differences in both the way they experience and react to gender inequality. Women's agency in responding to and contesting the patriarchal order varies and deserves highlighting especially in the context of the new aid agenda. With a relatively high percentage of women in Parliament and as heads of Ministries if compared to other countries in the region, Nicaragua presents a very complex, and thus attractive, political scenario for this study.

A further feature that makes Nicaragua an interesting case and that distinguishes it from many aid recipient countries is that it follows a dual track in its development policy: it is part of the (neoliberal) OECD and it's also a member of the (anti-neoliberal) Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas (ALBA). While proclaiming to be anti-neoliberal, very people-

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<sup>43</sup> I refer to Nicaragua as 'post-conflict society' here despite it not being officially denominated as such for three reasons: it is still dealing with the legacies of its relatively recent civil war, there has not been an official truth and reconciliation – type process of national scale, and it has not gone through any sort of official 'transition' from that period in the typical sense.



centred and fostering a participatory democracy, the Nicaraguan government has uneasy and mainly antagonistic relations with some key areas of civil society including feminist and women's rights groups. In this sense Nicaragua could be seen as an exceptional case because of this particular context and the intersection of issues it faces which can highlight aspects of areas that are less visible in less exceptional circumstances (Murphy, 2010). For instance, if a participatory approach involving women is so important to the production of progressive gender policies (as per Gender and Development theory), how reliable are gender measurements in Nicaragua considering the antagonistic relationship between the leftist government and women's organisations? In the context of very successful rates of achievement on locally managed development programmes (at the municipality level) this question needs to be examined more carefully.

#### **4.3. Description and logic of the case study**

The case study begins by considering two perspectives of Nicaragua as provided by 2 sets of *global* indicators: one offered by the country's performance on the indicators of aid effectiveness established in the Paris Declaration and, the second perspective is that provided by the Gender Inequality Index. An analysis of these two perspectives will ensue asking whether the GII is a viable index to measure aid effectiveness. The analysis will take into consideration the levels of analysis afforded by the two sets of indicators (Paris Declaration and GII) seeking to uncover the complexities of measuring gender in aid effectiveness using global indicators.

The next part of the study moves to the *local* level focusing on two development *projects* and a joint development *programme* in Nicaragua in order to investigate how effectiveness has been understood and measured by local actors. Project aid is given for a specific purpose (for example: capacity building activities, building materials for a new school or a hospital, etc) while programme aid is given for a specific sector (for example: funding the health or education sector of a country). The reason for choosing two projects and a joint programme stems from evidence revealed by Riddell (2008) which shows that project level aid has generally proven more successful in achieving development results. The projects therefore presented a good opportunity to look at two positive models but distinct enough from the joint programme level, which involves more actors. The selected joint programme

is one considered successful and involves a distinct set of assumptions and structures which provide an additional, unique, and constructive perspective to the study. Finally, the choice of selecting a joint programme provides a contrasting perspective to that offered by the projects, and which has the potential to deepen understanding of the differences and particularities of measuring effectiveness between small, NGO-led projects versus a larger programme involving multiple agencies and government institutions. On this basis, it is anticipated that a range of good practices on measuring effectiveness will become visible.

A brief introduction to the projects under study follows here to provide greater clarity in this section:

**Project one:** 'Indigenous and women's rights on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast'

This project on Gender Equality and Violence Against Women is led by Horizons of Friendship, an NGO based in Canada. Funded by the Canadian government Horizons works through a partnership with the Association of Indigenous Women of the Atlantic (AMICA) based in Puerto Cabezas. The project aims to build capacity in local communities among both men and women to prevent inter-family, sexual and gender-based violence. To explore this project in more depth, interviews were conducted with the Programme Coordinator for the Mesoamerica region, and the Director of AMICA in Nicaragua. This second interview with the director of AMICA was conducted in writing in order to circumvent technology issues which made a phone conversation impossible.

**Project two:** 'Labour Rights in Nicaragua'

This project was funded by the UK government and managed by the London-based Central America Women's Network (CAWN) in collaboration with Maria Elena Cuadra (MEC), its partner organisation in Nicaragua. The project promoted economic literacy and women's labour rights. An interview was conducted with the Chairperson of CAWN. Staff from Maria Elena Cuadra expressed their regret for not being able to participate.

**Joint programme:** 'From Rhetoric to Reality: Promoting Women's Participation and Gender Budgeting'



This is an MDG Achievement Fund programme involving nine UN agencies and ten Nicaraguan government institutions operating in fifteen municipalities of Nicaragua. As is explicit in the title, the joint programme aims to promote women's participation in decision making (at various levels) and gender budgeting.

As mentioned above, for the part of the study focused on the aforementioned projects and joint programme, interview questions were devised. The interview questions were meant to supplement the text-based research with practical experiences of working under the new aid agenda. The questions were designed to elicit information about the impact of the Paris Declaration in the organisations' ways of working and their practices on measuring aid effectiveness for gender equality projects. They sought to unearth organisations' interpretation of effectiveness and how the organisations go about measuring effectiveness on their gender equality projects. The interview questions were organised in 3 main thematic areas. First, the introduction provides an overview of the organisations' overall work, the extent of the organisation's reliance on government funds and the extent to which the organisations' work is funded on gender equality grounds. The second theme, the Paris Declaration and Aid Effectiveness, deals with questions related to the influence of the Paris Declaration in the work of the organisation. The questions here were aimed at exploring the organisations' understanding of effectiveness, and whether changes in their way of working (especially those related to measuring and reporting to donors on the effectiveness of their projects) favour the gender equality related goals of the projects / joint programme. The purpose was to become familiar with the positive aspects or challenges of measuring for effectiveness in gender equality work. The third theme, gender and effectiveness, focused on practices that are specific to gender equality and measuring for gender in aid effectiveness. For instance, the questions here focused on identifying gender-based approaches used by the organisations to measure effectiveness for gender equality results, including the use (or not use) of the GII to guide the organisations work. The purpose was to identify good practices of measuring effectiveness in gender equality which could be seen as elements of gender-sensitive indicators for aid effectiveness. The questions that were asked in these semi-structured interviews can be found in the thesis' appendix. The interviews have provided an enhanced perspective to the multi-text analysis and have helped contextualise the 'paper trail' clarifying the practicalities of working within

the new aid architecture. They have offered valuable insights into practices of measuring the effectiveness of aid with gender in mind.

Details about the ethics guiding the research have been outlined in the introduction of the thesis.

#### **4.4. Limitations of the case study**

A. Data availability – data for the cases are limited although it is the best available for this type of study. Rarely is data so specific to aid and gender equality found, not least on the new aid effectiveness agenda and gender equality.

B. Interviews – very few – one written (Project 1: one phone interview, one written interview; Project 2: one phone interview; Joint programme: none). These organisations are small and have only one staff person (sometimes part time only) allocated to this kind of project. In the case of the joint programme, three staff were initially enthusiastic about the interview but one person has been relocated while the other two are simply not responsive to being interviewed despite initial disposition and numerous attempts to contact them.

C. The reports that informed the analysis of the MDG-Fund joint programme were written considering a limited amount of the participating municipalities. So the specificities on good practices are not exhaustive.

I shall now turn to the case study.

#### **4.5. Nicaragua's Gender and Aid Politics**

##### **4.5.1. Background**

The Constitution of 1987 grants equal civil rights to all citizens of Nicaragua and prohibits gender-based discrimination. The country is a signatory to Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and ratified it in 1981.<sup>44</sup> While poverty is widespread in the country, it has greatest impact in households headed by

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<sup>44</sup> However, the Nicaraguan government has not signed the Optional Protocol of CEDAW without which the corresponding Committee cannot formally receive and evaluate complaints about violations.



women in rural areas (about one-fifth of rural households). Violence against women (VAW), both physical and psychological, is high in Nicaragua, and remains a problem across Latin America and the Caribbean (OECD, 2010). Indigenous, Afro-descendants and poor women are particularly vulnerable as they face what is known as 'triple discrimination' or 'triple glass ceiling'. In other words, they are discriminated against because of their gender, race and social class (Lucas, 2007).

Contemporary gender politics in Nicaragua have their roots in the years of the Sandinista revolution dating back to the 1970s. Guided by Marxist ideology, the Sandinistas held that women's emancipation was key to the struggle for freedom. Women's participation in the revolution was significant, some were guerrilla leaders, and some occupied high ranks in the revolutionary army. 'The idealised Sandinista woman was a mother, a young woman with a rifle on her shoulder grinning while holding a nursing infant' (Kampwirth, 2011: 4). But once the Sandinistas got into power, conflicting views on how to emancipate women and even what was meant by women's emancipation began to emerge. Femenías (2009) and later Kampwirth (2011) categorised these conflicting views into two categories: feminine and feminist.

Proponents of a feminine interpretation of women's emancipation argued that the revolution should open opportunities for women to better fulfil their traditional roles. In contrast, feminist revolutionaries argued that women's emancipation required challenging those traditional gender roles. Proponents of both schools of thought might support, for example, improving women's access to health care but for somewhat different reasons. Feminine thinkers would support better access to health care because taking care of the family's health is a woman's job. In contrast feminist thinkers would support better access to health care (especially reproductive health care) because it would free women to lead better lives, and to challenge the confines of traditional gender relations (Kampwirth, 2011: 5)

Another source of conflict was the military service. Despite women's participation in the guerrillas, once the Sandinistas came to power in the mid 1980s women were not included in the draft and were only permitted to serve as volunteers (despite pressure from AMNLAE – the Sandinista women organisation). It is reported that President Ortega practically told women to go give birth as it was now time to support the husbands. In 1985, the women's battalion was eliminated completely and many ended up in administrative positions. Around the same time, the first signs of an autonomous feminist movement began to emerge within the Sandinista affiliated labour unions.

A further source of tension was the issue of abortion. While women's organisations of both feminine and feminist camps were concerned about the death rates of women and there were demands to provide care in hospitals, it is reported that Ortega saw the promotion of birth control as imperialist efforts to stop movements for social justice before they even had a chance to start. He suggested that women who wanted birth control were disloyal and undermined the revolution (Kampwirth, 2011).

Daniel Ortega, the Sandinista leader, had won in a landslide in the 1986 elections. He was voted out of power by 1990 when Violeta Chamorro, the US backed candidate, secured victory. The following 16 years were dominated by three different right wing presidents who favoured neoliberal policies for the country. During that time, women and women's organisations suffered further challenges and setbacks linked to the neoliberal policy agenda. 'The old Sandinistas came back into power in 2007 under a new image replacing the Marxist-Leninist Daniel Ortega in military uniform, with Daniel the practicing Catholic in white shirt and jeans. The old revolutionary rhetoric of anti-imperialism and class struggle was replaced with the rhetoric of peace and reconciliation. The new vision of the revolutionary was traditional Catholic rather than liberation theology Catholic, anti-feminist rather than feminist' (Kampwirth, 2011). The government now denominates itself as the 'government of reconciliation and national unity' and espouses socialist, Christian and solidarity values explicitly.

As a result of some of the above mentioned tensions and further discontent with Ortega's tendencies to consolidate power favouring the party's interests over the interests of Nicaragua's social movements many key figures of the 'old' Sandinista movement parted from the FSLN and formed a different party (Sandinista Renovation Movement). Similarly, many feminist organisations parted from the old FSLN party and built a strong social movement. But while they were able to enjoy independence from the FSLN they now had to deal with the backlash of the anti-feminist movement. Although they were smaller in numbers, anti-feminist groups had the sturdy support of big institutions like the Catholic Church, several Evangelical Churches, and the state, especially the Ministries of Family, Education and Health. Kampwirth (2011) makes a further important point on the reasons for tensions between the state and feminist movement:



Gaining autonomy from the party of the revolution helped the feminists tremendously, but it had its downside. There comes a point when autonomy becomes alienation. For many members of the FSLN, and for many feminists, autonomy passed into alienation in 1998. In that year, Daniel Ortega's stepdaughter, Zoilamérica Narvaez publicly accused him of having sexually abused her from the age of 11, and having raped her from the age of 15. The autonomous feminist movement, especially the Women's Network Against Violence (Red de Mujeres Contra la Violencia), stood by Zoilamérica. In the years that followed, many feminists found it harder and harder to maintain their ties to their former comrades in arms. This all came to a head in 2006, when in the last weeks of the presidential campaign, the antifeminist movement finally succeeded in its efforts to ban therapeutic abortion. Astonishingly perhaps, the antifeminists only succeeded thanks to the votes of the party of the revolution, the FSLN. Despite their public protests and private lobbying efforts, feminist activists were helpless as their old party seemed to prefer improve its chances at the ballot box, even at the cost of women's lives. (Kampwirth, 2011: 11)

Feminist groups and other organisations (including newspapers) have been the subject of defamation and persecution from the State police since Ortega came back to power in 2007 (Bataillon, 2008). Previously, feminist organisations had also faced differences with Ortega's predecessor as they were seen to be 'competing' for foreign funds to carry out their work. But under Ortega's government there has been an escalation of these acts, which are reported as targeted to those who denounce him, his wife and/ or his political project as not authentic and in fact, corrupt. Ortega's wife in particular is accused of exercising inappropriate influence over government affairs as she has the power to hire and fire heads of agencies and acts as a chief of staff (Bataillon, 2008).

#### **4.5.2. Two development tracks in Nicaragua: The ALBA and the OECD's aid/ development effectiveness agenda**

In terms of official development assistance or foreign aid, Nicaragua has long been considered one of the most economically impoverished countries in the Western hemisphere. The country has had a long record of foreign aid relationships with the US being its main bilateral donor. For the period of 2004-2007, foreign aid represented an 11% of Nicaragua's GDP. At present the top donors in Nicaragua are: the Interamerican Development Bank, Spain, the US, the World Bank (through the International Development Association), Russia, Denmark, Japan, Germany, Switzerland, and the EU institutions. According to the OECD data, in 2012 Nicaragua received USD 532 million from OECD

countries, a 130 million less than in 2010 (OECD Statistics website, accessed: 20 January 2014). The next table provides a breakdown of the gross aid provided to Nicaragua by its top 10 donors.

**Aid provided to Nicaragua by its top 10 donors<sup>45</sup>**

Donor	Aid (gross) provided in USD million	Donor	Aid (gross) provided in USD million
IDA (special fund)	167	EU institutions	35
IDA	55	Japan	30
United States	53	Denmark	22
Russia	42	Germany	22
Spain	42	Switzerland	22

The current government of Nicaragua joined the Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas (ALBA) in 2007. The ALBA is a regional platform of social, political and economic integration comprised of 8 Latin American and Caribbean countries.<sup>46</sup> Initially founded in 2004 by the former President of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, it arose as a challenge to the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) and the capitalist neoliberal agendas. The main priority of the ALBA is to break away from the capitalist logic of profit and gain, the logic of competition and the logic of economics as the study of wealth. The ALBA is described as a popular construction, with people's participation having an important role in the task of integration. Its main values are: complementary action, co-operation, solidarity and respect for the sovereignty of nations. The ALBA's maximum authority is the Presidents' Council. There is a Council of Ministers overseeing the political, social and economic areas. There is a Women's Ministerial Council to ensure that gender equality is treated as a cross-cutting matter in all of the integration instruments. Still under development, and at the same hierarchical level of the other Councils, is the Council of Social Movements which is the space for the popular construction of the ALBA. Since 2009 the ALBA accounts with its own currency, the SUCRE, to be used in electronic transactions amongst ALBA-TCP

<sup>45</sup> Source: OECD Statistics, 2013.

<sup>46</sup> ALBA members are: Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Venezuela.



members rather than the US dollar. The SUCRE is meant to counter US control of Latin American economies and to help foster stability of the regional market.

Nicaragua has received a significant flow of new aid under the ALBA, especially from Venezuela. It is reported that Nicaragua has received \$557 million in 2011 alone and more than \$2 billion over the past 5 years. To put this in perspective, the 2011 amount is more than the total amount reported by all OECD donors for 2011-2012 above. Furthermore, according to Nicaraguan newspaper 'El Nuevo Diario', the EU announced that it will provide Nicaragua 204 million for the period of 2014-2017 in the context of 'doubling' aid for the Latin American region (El Nuevo Diario website: accessed 24 March 2014). However, while Nicaragua has relied heavily on foreign aid for many years, Venezuelan aid does not get reported in the general budget of Nicaragua. There is no third party scrutiny over this aid budget. Therefore there is no exercise of accounting for or measuring the effectiveness of this aid by Parliament. Instead, it is managed privately by President Ortega leading to concerns over transparency, mounting debt, clientelism (mainly through citizens' power councils), corruption and unfair business practices ( Cannon and Kirby, 2012; Rogers, 2011; Schulz, 2007).<sup>47</sup>

The IMF... announced it was suspending talks with the Nicaraguan government regarding the fourth revision of the country's economic programme following President's Daniel Ortega's announcement of a monthly \$25 'Christian, socialist, solidarity' bonus for some 120,000 public sector workers. The bonuses are contentious because they will be financed not by the State but rather by the nebulous cooperation from Venezuela which remains outside the budget (Latin American Weekly Report 2010 quoted in Kampwirth 2011)

And besides the IMF, other donors have expressed concerns (dating from the previous President Alemán) over undemocratic practices and corruption in Nicaragua leading to the suspension of aid disbursements or closure of in-country donors' offices: the UK's DFID (in 2009) Finland, the US (in 2012), the EU and the World Bank. Some of the concerning practices involve the President's exertion of full control over information flows and decisions regarding the public sector, increased absence of updated information about

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<sup>47</sup> The Citizen's Power Councils are the main mechanism of the government to promote participative democracy and charged with the implementation of some government programmes.

international aid, and the disfigurement of 'global roundtable' meetings on development cooperation and with the Budget Support Group<sup>48</sup>, to name just a few areas (Schulz, 2007).

Nicaragua is a signatory to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005 and, despite the change in government and its ALBA membership, it remains committed to the OECD-led aid/ development effectiveness process.

#### 4.6. Nicaragua in the Paris Declaration

This segment shows Nicaragua's performance on Paris Declaration indicators according to the Monitoring Survey conducted by the OECD in 2008.<sup>49</sup> The table 4A below illustrates how Nicaragua has rated in each indicator based on the information they reported to the OECD Monitoring Survey in 2008 (the most recent publically available data). The table is followed by a qualitative explanation of Nicaragua's ranking in these indicators. The World Bank's report (2007) on 'Results-Based National Development Strategies: Assessment and Challenges Ahead' was the source of interpretation of the scoring system.

##### Nicaragua's scores according the indicators of the Paris Declaration

PD Indicators	2005	2007	Progress % points
1. Ownership: Does country have operational development strategy?	D	C	1 level up
2.a Alignment: How reliable are country public financial systems?	3.5	4.0	+ .5
2.b Alignment: How reliable are country procurement systems?	No data reported	No data reported	n/a
3. Alignment: Are government budget estimates comprehensive and realistic?	73%	87%	+14
4. Alignment: How much technical assistance is coordinated with country programmes?	29% (USD m 51 in coordinated technical coop)	45% (USD m 112 in coordinated technical coop)	

<sup>48</sup> The Global Donor Roundtable is the most important forum of dialogue and cooperation with donors in Nicaragua. The Budget Support Group serves as a discussion forum for donors working on budget support issues.

<sup>49</sup> Nicaragua did not participate in the 2011 Monitoring Survey so this is the most updated data available.



PD Indicators	2005	2007	Progress % points
5. Alignment: How much aid for the government sectors uses country systems?	5a. Public Financial Management 44%	5a. Public Financial Management 48%	+4
	5b. Procurement 28%	5b. Procurement 45%	+17
6. Alignment: How many PIUs are parallel to country structures?	107 (for ref)	49 (PIUs)	-58
7. Alignment: Are disbursements on schedule and reported by governments?	70%	74%	+4
8. Alignment: How much bilateral aid is untied?	85%	85%	-1
9. Harmonisation: How much aid is programme-based?	48%	46%	-2
10. Harmonisation: A. How many donor missions are coordinated?	9%	20%	+10
10.B. Harmonisation: How much country analysis is coordinated?	53%	52%	-1
11. Managing for Results: Does country have monitorable results-based frameworks?	C	C	n/a
12. Mutual Accountability: Does country have reviews on mutual accountability?	Yes	Yes	n/a

(Source of data: OECD Monitoring Survey 2008)

The table above presenting Nicaragua's ranking according to the Paris Declaration indicators provides a sense of the country's progress in the various aspects measured by the indicators based on the baseline year of 2005. Nicaragua did not complete the last survey of 2011 despite the country's commitment and the actual collection of relevant data for such survey 'due to the political situation at the time'.<sup>50</sup> The paragraphs that follow explain the results in detail.

<sup>50</sup> This information is based on email correspondence with a member of staff at the OECD.

According to the Paris Declaration indicator on 'ownership' Nicaragua scores 'C' which means its operational development strategy is considered to be at 'intermediate' level. To obtain this ranking, the World Bank qualitatively assesses the operational value of the country's development strategy on the basis of three criteria considered to be the essential features of efforts to harness domestic and national resources for development purposes: (1) the existence of an authoritative country-wide development policy (i.e. unified strategic framework), (2) A realistic development policy that clearly identifies priorities, and (3) Well-costed policies that can be funded (i.e. linking strategies to the budget). The highest ranking possible is 'A' (very strong) and the lowest ranking is 'E' (very weak) (World Bank, 2007). Nicaragua's performance in this survey is considered an improvement from previous D level performance (covering the period of 2001-2005) which placed Nicaragua in the bottom 21% of the surveyed countries.

The principle of 'alignment' is monitored and measured by a total of 8 indicators. The first indicator measures the reliability of the country's public financial and procurement systems. The strength of the Public Financial Management (PFM) system (indicator 2a) was assessed on the basis of a World Bank diagnostic tool known as the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA). This CPIA measures the extent to which a country's policy and institutional framework supports sustainable growth and poverty reduction. There are three dimensions considered here: (1) whether the country has a comprehensive and credible budget linked to policy priorities, (2) the effectiveness of the financial management systems to ensure that the budget is implemented as intended in a controlled and predictable way, and (3) the timeliness and accuracy of the accounting and fiscal reporting. The highest possible score is 6 (very strong) and the lowest possible score is 1 (very weak). Nicaragua scored 3.5 indicating an intermediate level. In terms of the reliability of their procurement system (indicator 2b), no data were reported.

For the rest of the indicators going forward (except for 8 and 11) the data of the 2008 survey informing this segment was drawn by the OECD from the Monitoring Survey conducted in 2006.

The third indicator relates to the alignment of aid flows to national priorities. It looks at the percentage of aid flows to the government sector that is reported on Nicaragua's national



budgets. For this, the survey asked whether government budget estimates were comprehensive and realistic. Budgets are considered realistic when government estimates of aid are matched with what donors actually delivered. This is the responsibility of both donors (to provide timely and accurate estimates) and of recipient countries (to report on that basis). The objective of this indicator is to ensure that aid is recorded in the annual budgets of aid recipient countries so that government can show accurate and comprehensive reports to their legislatures and citizens (OECD, 2008). For Nicaragua, this alignment indicator is rated at 87% compared to a less favourable 73% reported in 2005.

The following indicator (4), measures the percentage of donor capacity development support provided through coordinated programmes consistent with Nicaragua's national development strategy. For this, the survey asked how much technical assistance was coordinated with country programmes. Nicaragua reported a 45% of coordinated technical cooperation. This indicates that Nicaragua was well on its way to achieving the set target of 50% for 2010.

While the first two indicators under the principle of alignment looked at the reliability of Nicaragua's public financial management system and of the procurement system, the next two indicators (5a and 5b) measure the actual *use* of these systems by aid and by donors. The survey enquired on the percentage *of aid* for the government sector that used country systems. Nicaragua reported a 48% of aid using public financial management systems (an increase of 4% from 2005) and a 45% of aid using the national procurement system (an increase of 17% from 2005). For these indicators, the systems in question are qualified as those which 'either (a) adhere to broadly accepted good practices or (b) have a reform programme in place to achieve these'. However, neither the PD nor the Monitoring Survey provide guidance as to which these good practices are nor is their existence/ observance probed through sub-indicators.

Parallel implementation units (PIU) are project coordination offices established by donors to support the implementation and administration of projects and programmes. A country, for example, can have as many of PIUs (which vary in size) as there are donors. These have typically been used by donors instead of (or in addition to) national government systems to manage aid programmes thus increasing the administrative burden of aid recipient

governments. The Paris Declaration aimed to cut the number of these units by two thirds (by 2010) to encourage the use of recipient country systems. Indicator 6 shows that Nicaragua went from having 107 PIUs in 2005 to 49 in 2007, a reduction of more than one half.

One of the key challenges faced by many aid recipient countries is the volatility and unpredictability of aid. That is, while certain amounts of aid might be promised or allocated to a country, its disbursement does not always arrive in a timely manner. This unpredictability means recipient countries are unable to plan ahead or make projections based on the knowledge of how much aid will be received from one year to the next (Riddell, 2008). To make aid more predictable, Paris Declaration indicator 7 measures the extent to which aid disbursements are released according to agreed schedules in annual or multi-year frameworks, and whether they are accurately recorded in country accounting systems. In 2008, the rate of timely aid disbursements for Nicaragua and reported by the government was 74%, a 4% increase from the year 2005.

The last aspect measured under the principle of 'alignment' is the issue of tied aid. As was briefly mentioned in chapter 2, donors often tie their aid-giving to conditions that the recipient country use the money only to purchase goods and services, including technical assistance and consultancy services, from the donor country (Riddell, 2008). The goal established by indicator 8 is that aid be untied. No specific target was set for 2010 other than 'continued progress over time'. Nicaragua reported that 85% of its aid was untied.

The next principle, 'harmonisation', is focused on 'improving co-ordination amongst donors and streamlining procedures to avoid duplication of efforts and reducing the transaction costs for country aid managers dealing with fragmented aid delivery mechanisms (OECD, 2008). Harmonisation is measured by 2 indicators in the PD. The first (number 9 in the table) refers to the use of common arrangements and procedures and it is measured by the percentage of aid provided as programme-based approaches. The PD defines programme-based approaches as:

a way of engaging in development cooperation based on the principles of co-ordinated support for a locally owned programme of development, such as a national development strategy, a sector programme, a thematic programme or a



programme of a specific organisation. Programme based approaches share the following features: (a) leadership by the host country or organisation; (b) a single comprehensive programme and budget framework; (c) a formalised process for donor co-ordination and harmonisation of donor procedures for reporting, budgeting, financial management and procurement; (d) efforts to increase the use of local systems for programme design and implementation, financial management, monitoring and evaluation. For the purpose of indicator 9 performance will be measured separately across the aid modalities that contribute to programme-based approaches. (Paris Declaration, 2005, appendix)

To assess performance in this indicator, the OECD Survey asked how much aid is programme-based. Nicaragua reported a 46% of programme based aid. It must be said that, according to the most recent 2011 Monitoring Survey, many countries found reporting on this indicator as problematic. Amongst other reasons, the definition of programme-based approaches seems too similar to other aid modalities.

The second indicator related to Harmonisation (number 10 in the table) is centred on encouraging shared analysis between donor and recipient countries. Performance is measured by the percentage of (a) field missions and/ or (b) country analytic work, including diagnostic reviews that are joint. The survey found that 20% of the donor missions are coordinated (a 10% increase from the year 2005) and that 52% of country analysis is coordinated (1% less than the baseline year).

The following principle measured by the Paris Declaration is 'managing for results'. There is only one indicator to measure for this principle and it is concerned with the quality of the country's performance assessment frameworks to assess progress against the national development strategies and the sector programmes. To calculate performance in this index the same methodology used for indicator one (ownership) is applied. The survey asked whether the country has monitorable results-based frameworks and Nicaragua scored C indicating an intermediate level of quality.

The final principle, mutual accountability, also uses one indicator and it concentrates in whether or not there is a country-level mechanism for mutual assessment of progress on partnership's commitment arising from the PD or a local harmonisation and alignment plan. The goal is that all countries have one such mechanism in place and Nicaragua reported to have one.

The indicators of the Paris Declaration shown above provide a very specific picture of aid effectiveness in Nicaragua based on rankings of management instruments and procedures. The perspective provided by these indicators resonate with earlier discussions (chapter one and two) on the workings of a technocratic, efficiency- based and gender blind understanding of aid effectiveness emerging from the neoliberal mindset. This perspective will be further analysed in the following chapter.

#### **4.7. Nicaragua according to the Gender Inequality Index**

The Gender Inequality Index is a quantitative measure meant to capture the loss of achievement in three areas within a country due to gender inequality: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market. As it was already discussed in the chapter three, this composite measure is the latest in a series of gender focused indices that intends to overcome the issues associated with its predecessors (the GDI and the GEM) but itself is subject of criticism (Permanyer, 2010). However, as the most improved index on gender inequality, this index does provide a perspective on Nicaragua that could inform judgements on aid and gender policy making.

Nicaragua has a GII value of 0.461, which places it in number 89 out of 148 countries in the 2012 index. In Nicaragua women hold 40.2 percent of Parliamentary seats and 30.8 percent of adult women have reached a secondary or higher level of education compared to 44.7 of their male counterparts. For every 100,000 live births, 95 women die from pregnancy related causes; and the adolescent fertility rate is 104.9 births per 1000 births. Female participation in the labour market is 46.7 percent compared to 80 for men.

#### **Nicaragua's GII for 2012 relative to selected countries and groups**



	GII value	GII rank	Maternal Mortality ratio	Adolescent fertility rate	Female Seats in Parliament (%)	Population with at least secondary education (%)		Labour force participation rate (%)	
						Female	Male	Female	Male
Nicaragua	0.461	89	95	104.9	40.2	30.8	44.7	46.7	80
Honduras	0.483	100	100	85.9	19.5	20.7	18.8	42.3	82.8
El Salvador	0.441	82	81	76.2	26.2	34.8	40.8	47.4	78.6
Latin America & Caribbean	0.419	-	74	70.6	24.4	49.8	51.1	53.7	79.9
Medium HDI	0.457	-	121	44.7	18.2	42.1	58.8	50.5	79.9

(Source: Human Development Report 2013 – Nicaragua)

None of the reports and academic material consulted for this research made reference to the use of GII for the purposes of assessing the effectiveness of aid. The organisations interviewed for this research, as it will be seen later in this chapter, indicated that they never use the GII to assess their work. One of the interviewees pointed out that this was not because of lack of interest but because they chose indicators that were specific to their work with partners and that they ‘don’t necessarily like the GII type (read: global) indicators’ (interview with Horizons, 2014). While the interviewee did not know with certainty what the reasons behind the non- use of this index were, she signalled that the GII type indicators were not seen to connect with what the organisation is trying to measure. The second interviewee, from a different organisation, also shared this view.

#### 4.8. Project 1: Indigenous and Women’s Rights

**Project:** *Indigenous and Women’s Rights on Nicaragua’s Atlantic Coast*

**Scope:** Local level

**Funder:** Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD)

**Aid recipient:** Horizons of Friendship (Ontario, Canada)

**Local partner:** Association of Indigenous Women of the Atlantic region (AMICA)

**Duration of the project:** March 2012 to February 2014

#### 4.8.1. Introduction

This is a case of Canadian development aid in support of Nicaragua. The government of Canada funds 'Horizons of Friendship', an Ontario-based non-governmental organisation. Horizons of Friendship works through its local partner in Nicaragua, the 'Association of Indigenous Women of the Atlantic' (AMICA) in support of women's rights. It should be noted that during the course of this research, on March 2013, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was integrated into the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD). Thus, the text will only refer to CIDA for events that took place when that agency was still in existence.

For the exploration of the research questions on this case, a combination of textual material and interviews were used. The textual material included: Annual Progress Reports (2012-2015) of Horizons of Friendship, newsletters produced by Horizons of Friendship, application forms and guiding criteria for new projects of Horizons of Friendship, Financial Statements of Horizons of Friendship, the Strategy Plan on Aid Effectiveness 2009-2012 of the Canadian DFATD, Reports on the Responses of International Aid Agencies to Violence Against Women in the context of the new aid architecture, the Guide to Results Based Management of the Canadian Government, and informational material (including audio visual) available in the website of Horizons of Friendship (Horizons heretofore). This documentation was supplemented by 2 interviews: one with Horizons of Friendship senior staff (3 hours duration) and one with AMICA (in writing). This section will provide an overview of Horizons of Friendship and AMICA as organisations and an overview of their work with indigenous women in the North Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua through this project. The subsequent section will outline the results of the project and, lastly, the organisations' approach to assessing and measuring the project's effectiveness.

Horizons is a 40 year old non-governmental development organisation (NGDO). It is the only Canadian development NGDO working exclusively with the Mesoamerica region<sup>51</sup> supporting 17 partners in 7 countries. HoF is funded by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (45%), which recently integrated the previous

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<sup>51</sup> For the purposes of its work, Horizons of Friendship defines Measoamerica as the geographic area comprising Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Guatemala.



Canadian International Development Agency into its operations. Horizons is also funded by a range of other donors, including foundations and individuals (55%). As part of an agreement with the DFATD Horizons is expected to find matching funds on the amount they receive from the government (about a million Canadian dollars). While Horizons was originally a humanitarian-based organisation working to sponsor children in Honduras, over the years it has evolved into a partnership-based organisation working on long term change on themes identified by their partners in the Mesoamerica region. The main thematic areas of Horizons include: Gender Equality, Violence Against Women, HIV/AIDS, Food Security, Migration, Afro-descendent and Indigenous People's Rights, Intercultural Bilingual Education, and Ancestral Medicine. These themes, except for Ancestral Medicine, are conceptualised as 7 learning networks and were identified by the local partners in Nicaragua. Horizons serves as a link to their partner organisations working on similar thematic areas so that they can engage with one another at a regional or national level with the aim of making an impact on public policy.

Through support for the above mentioned thematic areas, Horizons seeks to develop relationships to work with local organisations in their capacity building efforts and for these to ultimately become self-sustaining. For this, Horizons provides guidance and training on a range of organisational matters such as the development of strategic plans, with undertaking institutional audits, with developing their administrative and accounting systems, etc. According to a senior staff of Horizons interviewed for this research, a lot of emphasis is placed on building relationships with local partners: '... the idea and goal is that by the medium to the longer term our relationship will be stronger. No matter what the reason for ending the relationship might be, they are hopefully stronger at that point' (interview with Horizons 6 Nov 2013). In Canada, Horizons works through community outreach activities to engage the Canadian public in education about the realities of their partners in Mesoamerica, and raise awareness about the Canadian international development cooperation programme. An additional part of Horizons' work involves welcoming and supporting a small community of temporary migrant workers in Cobourg, Ontario, where HoF is based ([www.horizons.org](http://www.horizons.org), accessed on 25 Aug, 2013).

Horizons' partner in Nicaragua for the project '*Indigenous and Women's Rights on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast*' is the Association of Indigenous Women of the Atlantic Coast

(AMICA). AMICA is a Miskito-led community organisation that emerged out the women's movement at the end of the 1980s in the Atlantic coast of the country. It was created in response to the critical conditions that existed in the region after long periods of insurgency and counter-insurgency. AMICA was the first organisation of its kind to emerge in that part of the country. Its initial focus was to work with women – Mískito women in particular – around health care issues. Most recently, AMICA's work has expanded to include issues of domestic violence, violence against women, and the protection of the environment. AMICA works with 304 communities in the municipalities of Puerto Cabezas, Waspán, and Prinzapolca and has strong working relationships with like minded organisations in the Atlantic Coast region (Horizons newsletter, Fall 2013). Some of the communities they support are located in remote areas relative to the main towns. While many Miskito people speak Spanish as well as Miskito, the main language in the region used is Miskito. AMICA works through Miskito language locally and uses Spanish to communicate with the Spanish speaking population and with Horizons of Friendship (interview with AMICA, 14 Nov, 2013).

#### **4.8.2. Results of the Project**

The project focuses on 'building capacity in local communities amongst both men and women to prevent inter-family, sexual and gender-based violence. The project is composed of 3 main areas: training young women on how to access to justice and legal services, working directly in the communities to support women who have experienced violence, and supporting community leaders and traditional Miskito authorities in the application of the law and advocating within the official justice system' ([www.horizons.ca](http://www.horizons.ca)- accessed 3 Sept 2013). The main results of the project were:

1. A total of 160 Miskito Indigenous women in rural communities on the North Coast of Nicaragua received training in their first language on Nicaragua's new Comprehensive Law on Violence against Women (Law 779) and the Criminal Code Reforms (Law 641),
2. Twelve communal judges and community leaders are now actively engaged at the community level with a stronger understanding of laws on violence against women and how to better prevent such violence in their communities.



3. In March 2013, hosted a Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Rights and the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence with the participation of 63 people (44 female; 19 male) including communal judges, municipal and regional authorities, and community members.

4. AMICA's legal aid office provided legal advice and accompanied a total of 76 cases involving inter-family, sexual, and gender-based violence.'

(Horizons of Friendship, 2013: 38)

#### **4.8.3. Assessing and Measuring Effectiveness**

Like many other organisations, Horizons of Friendship and AMICA have undergone a swift process of change to adapt to the new aid landscape in the wake of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. According to the documentation reviewed and an interview with a senior staff of Horizons, the organisations have had to take on new ways of working and, in the case of Horizons, it has had to rethink its approach to ensure the financial viability of its projects due to the reduced funding landscape that has prevailed since the new aid effectiveness agenda came into force. Describing some of the changes a senior staff of Horizons explained that in 2008, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) updated and introduced its policy on results-based management (RBM) framework to the organisations they fund, which affected Horizons overall and its reporting mechanisms.

'Since then, the terms "effectiveness" and "results-based" took on increased importance as did the need to show results in very concrete ways' (interview with Horizons, 6 Nov 2013). As a result, and in accordance with the new results-based management approach, Horizons then proceeded to extend RBM tools to its local partners in Nicaragua (as well as to their other Mesoamerica partners). The organisation has been both training and requiring its partners to use these tools.

Results-based management is not new in public policy. It is a subfield of a larger body of work, new public management, which focuses in making the public sector more effective (Hulme, 2010). However, its use in development cooperation is relatively new. According to the Canadian DFATD, a 'Results-Based Management' approach is a life-cycle approach to management that integrates strategy, people, resources, processes, and measurements

to improve decision-making, transparency and accountability. The approach focuses on achieving outcomes, implementing performance measurement, learning, and adapting, as well as reporting performance. There are three main RBM working tools: the logic model, the performance measurement framework, and a risk register. The specifics of this model will be explored in more detail in the following chapter alongside the analysis of this chapter's findings.

When asked whether the use of these RBM tools had been favourable or challenging to Horizons' work, the interviewee acknowledged that despite the fact that the use of such framework was imposed by DFATD, Horizons considers this to have been 'generally positive for the organisation in terms of being more focused on results and contributing towards greater transparency and accountability to and from its local partners' (interview with Horizons, 6 November 2013). This approach, the interviewee further expressed, promotes partner's capacity to apply for funding independently while simultaneously making it easier for Horizons to report back to DFATD about the work conducted through their partners.

On the other hand, Horizons spoke about the funding modality of using 'calls for proposals' based on pre-established themes by DFATD as very restrictive: 'many of the calls for proposals have been thematic and we have simply not been able to apply. They're either geographically focused or they're focused on an existing idea such as the extraction industry or another focus...' (interview with Horizons 6 November 2013). These competitive bidding processes contrasted with the era preceding the Paris Declaration when organisations were able to develop programmes and projects in consultation with their local partners based on local needs. Proposals were presented to CIDA and the decision to fund them was made according to pre-established, publicly known criteria. Now, organisations find themselves restricted to working within selected thematic/geographic areas pre-established by DFATD, which can vary from one year to another and with relatively short notice to applicants. Similarly, the interviewee noted, because funding is limited to 3 and sometimes 5 year cycles it is difficult to undertake adequate consultative processes and develop long-term sustainable projects with local partners in Nicaragua. These funding time-frames and the emphasis on short term, easy to measure projects and programmes have forced Horizons to approve projects for local partners on a one year basis only. Further, and in line with the results-based management tools, Horizons'



partners are expected to undertake baseline studies prior to receiving funding for a new project. Considering the time it takes to conduct a baseline study, which involves carrying out consultations with the community through participative processes, the time limitation poses a significant challenge to the quality of the projects (interview with Horizons, 6 Nov 2013).

The previously mentioned interview with Horizons also revealed that changes described above have also had repercussions on how the effectiveness of aid is measured and reported on (by both donors and partners). CIDA (at the time) was interested in showing concrete (measurable) results to the Canadian public.<sup>52</sup> In this regard, the interviewee added:

I have noticed that [CIDA] likes the sound bites and I understand that they are trying to demonstrate the work that they've supported for years ... but I don't think it is the concept of aid and overseas development assistance that is under scrutiny right now. It's the actual agency that's supporting this for so long [that is under scrutiny]. (Interview with Horizons, 6 November 2013)

The current focus of DFATD emphasizes achievements more at the macro-level (interview Horizons, 6 Nov 2013) and requires the organisations it funds to report on the following three priority cross-cutting areas: strengthening governance institutions and practices, advancing equality between men and women, and environmental sustainability ([www.acdi-cida.gc.ca](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca), accessed: 20 January 2014). In turn, Horizons also requires its local partners to report on these areas, and has a dedicated staff person who provides them support and training.<sup>53</sup>

When asked about how the organisation goes about defining the effectiveness of their projects, Horizons of Friendship indicated that it uses the terms 'success', 'results', and 'effectiveness' interchangeably. Their approach to defining effectiveness and success relies on securing partner organisations' institutional structures, procedures, and projects that are long-term and self-sustaining. In the words of a senior staff: 'We see effectiveness as strengthening organisations' (interview, 7 November 2014). As such, she revealed, the

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<sup>52</sup> A result is defined by DFATD as 'a describable or measurable change that is derived from a cause-and-effect relationship' (Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development website, accessed 22 January 2014).

<sup>53</sup> While in the past DFATD has required reporting on environmental sustainability, and equality between men and women, reporting governance is a new aspect of the aid effectiveness approach.

focus of most of the work conducted by Horizons is on strengthening institutional capacity. This type of focus satisfies the new cross-cutting area – strengthening governance institutions and practices – recently established by DFATD.

Horizons' account on strengthening partners' organisations, according to its annual report, includes a combination of quantitative and qualitative information. It speaks of providing 'institutional strengthening support in terms of improved administration and accounting procedures, participatory project planning, results-based management, development of institutional policies and strategic plans, as well as gender mainstreaming' (Horizons of Friendship, 2013a: 8). Horizons' approach to the previous includes face-to-face capacity building activities (usually involving a locally based consultant) and mentoring services at a distance (via telephone) (interview with Horizons, 6 November 2013). The emphasis on institutional capacity is one of the organisation's areas of work under their 'Strengthening Civil Society Programme' in which Horizons also, and uniquely, describes itself in its role of 'supporting partners in improving their own aid effectiveness' (Horizons of Friendship, 2013a: 7).

However, when asked how Horizons measures the effectiveness of its projects, Horizons used a different focus. The interviewee spoke of measuring the effectiveness of the projects as based on the premise that community development and social change is best supported by working in three interlinked areas: service to the community (workshops, trainings, legal services, etc), knowledge production (could be academic or non-academic research, documentation of traditional knowledge, policy related, etc), and citizen engagement (through education, campaigns or other activities that support the community's capacity to engage the authorities with their issues of concern). Thus, Horizons sees effectiveness and success taking place when these three aspects are being addressed and progress is made therein. They encourage their partners to address those areas and report on them as well as in gender. In terms of specific indicators Horizons is expected to provide to DFATD, they are expected to report on a risk indicator which means carrying out a risk assessment of their proposal to DFATD every year.

In its Annual Report 2012-2013, Horizons accounts for its performance and results achieved. It singles out 'improved aid effectiveness' as one of the results of their



programme and describes the need to develop indicators on gender mainstreaming in relation to their regional learning action clusters. The report indicates that this will be done through the completion of 'disaggregated gender baseline studies' for each cluster. Horizons' intention to ensure it is 'effectively measuring partners' perceived changes in their abilities to engage with authorities on public policy initiatives' as another area that needs indicator development is also highlighted in the report (Horizons, 2013: 5).

At the local level in Nicaragua, the interview questions to AMICA sought to find out what understanding of effectiveness guides its work as well as its approach to measuring gender equality under the new aid agenda. According to the responses, AMICA states it approaches effectiveness primarily from the perspective of dealing with the issues of concern to the ultimate beneficiaries of aid. AMICA's approach to gender equality and violence against women (VAW) takes into account temporal dimensions of VAW. AMICA stated that the long term nature of the culture that has created VAW and the time when VAW is likely to diminish goes beyond a short term project with Horizons. This understanding is reflected on how AMICA judges the effectiveness of the aid it receives:

Quando las victimas vuelven a entrar a los ciclos de violencia, no se valora que el proyecto haya sido ineficaz, si tomamos en cuenta que la cultura machista ha existido desde siglos atrás y no es posible que la violencia se supere en uno o dos años, lo que si hemos dicho es que los proyectos que abordan el problema de la violencia deben de ser de largo plazo, si realmente queremos incidir en este tipo de fenómeno social.

[When the victims re-enter cycles of violence, it is not considered that the project has been ineffective if we take into account that the culture of 'machismo' has existed for centuries and it is not possible to overcome violence in one or two years. What we have said is that the projects that address the problem of violence ought to be long term, if we really want to influence this type of social phenomena.]

(interview with AMICA; 14 November 2013)

In these words, the interviewee is referring to the long-engrained culture of machismo which refers to a socio- cultural model of masculinity that privileges men within a social order that grants them rights and privileges because they are men. Machismo is socially constructed and dictates the values, attitudes and behaviours that men should adopt in order to be considered men and to feel that they are men. It shapes interactions between men and women, men and men, men and children, and is transmitted from generation to

generation (Muñoz Cabrera, 2010:34). AMICA explained that it advocates for long term projects that take this long term reality of the culture shaping this reality into account and support women in accessing justice and participating in workshops, and counselling. Similarly, AMICA sees the importance of working with men and have successfully involved them in the VAW projects through education, engaging with the local authorities, and with judges.

Para evitar represalias contra las mujeres, en los procesos de educación siempre se trabaja con los hombres que normalmente son los agresores y las autoridades de las comunidades, y esto ha ayudado muchísimo.

[In the processes of education we always work with the men, who are normally the aggressors, and with the community authorities, in order to avoid retaliation against women, and that has helped a lot.]

(interview with AMICA; 14 November 2013)

AMICA has begun using results- based management tools as required by Horizons and DFATD. As such, they conduct baseline studies prior to beginning a new project. The purpose of the studies is usually to identify the needs and gaps in relation to VAW in order to devise their project proposal to obtain the funding from Horizons. On the basis of the baseline study, AMICA establishes the projects' objectives and indicators, including gender indicators, together with community leaders and beneficiaries (written interview, 14 Nov 2013). They also use RBM tools for monitoring and reporting on their projects to Horizons.

AMICA's approach to assessing and measuring the effectiveness and the results of their projects involves using the objectives created for the project. The impact of the project in terms of gender is measured using the indicators defined in the initial baseline study. That is, they look at the situation 'before and after' the project using the information from the baseline study in relation to the objectives they set to achieve. AMICA also conducts formative and summative evaluations with their participants and community leaders. These evaluations are usually designed by AMICA's staff guided by the objectives and gender indicators established early on through the baseline study (written interview, AMICA; 14 November 2014). AMICA also carries out community wide events where opportunities are given to provide verbal feedback and discussion on the initiatives undertaken. The interview conducted with AMICA for this study identified unintended/



unmeasured results of its work on VAW. For example, AMICA reported that after receiving support from the organisation, many beneficiaries experienced: new leadership opportunities, improvements in their quality of life, and changes in the attitudes of the participants' siblings, neighbours and family once they shared the knowledge acquired in AMICA's trainings. AMICA also shared that after participating in its projects, many of the women tend to get involved in local politics, or accompanying (escorting) victims of VAW in the various processes that support them (counselling, access to justice, etc). Some often develop actions to promote the defence of women's human rights (interview, AMICA; 14 November 2013).

#### **4.9. Project 2: Civil and Economic Rights of Women**

**Project:** *'Promoting Civil and Economic Rights of Women in Nicaragua'*

**Scope:** Local level

**Funder:** UK Department for International Development

**Aid recipient:** Central America Women's Network

**Name of local partner:** Movimiento de Mujeres María Elena Cuadra (MEC)

**Duration of the project:** April 2005–March 2008

**Budget:** £325,000

##### **4.9.1. Introduction**

This is a case of a project on 'Promoting Civil and Economic Rights of Women in Nicaragua' funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). DFID funds the London-based Central America Women's Network (CAWN) which implements the project through working with its local partner 'Movimiento de Mujeres María Elena Cuadra' (MEC). For the exploration of the research questions in this case, I relied on textual material available through CAWN's website (reports, newsletters and research publications), through the website of their partner in Nicaragua (MEC), an external evaluation report carried out on behalf of CAWN by an independent consultant, and one interview with the co-Director of CAWN.

CAWN grew out of the women's solidarity movement in 1991 following the conference 'Breaking chains – Making links' organised by women's sections of the Central America and Human Rights committees. CAWN was set up as a coordinating group to enhance the work of the committees and provide a regional perspective. CAWN contributes to uphold the political, social, cultural and economic rights of Central American women by working with others to: 1) raise awareness of the situation of women in Central America including the impact of global, regional and national policies on women's rights and make women's agency visible in contesting and resisting the threats posed by these policies, 2) strengthen advocacy and campaign efforts to protect and support women's human rights in the region, 3) promote solidarity links in support of the rights of women in the Central American region (CAWN's website, accessed: 12 Jan 2014).

CAWN can be described as a small NGO comprised of 4 core staff who works with and through numerous local partners in the Central American region.

CAWN's local partner, the Movimiento de Mujeres María Elena Cuadra (MEC), is a social movement that began in 1994. It is composed of approximately 70,000 members in 7 Departments of Nicaragua. The members of MEC are typically women workers in the maquila factories of the free trade zone areas, unemployed women, domestic workers, small entrepreneurs, and rural women. MEC works to improve the quality of life of these women in the poorest sectors of Nicaragua and defends the human rights of women, as women, workers and mothers. The organisation has worked to influence government policies (and those of different Ministries and the Judiciary) and its proposals have often been accepted and converted into legislation to support women's rights, such as on labour legislation and equal opportunities. In addition, MEC has raised issues for public debate on sexual and reproductive rights, women's labour rights, and the legislation on therapeutic abortion and VAW. MEC holds an office in Managua serviced by approximately 15 staff, a significant decrease from the original 40 staff.<sup>54</sup> They have a national assembly, a council

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<sup>54</sup> An interview with Horizons of Friendship, which also worked with MEC in a more recent project, revealed that due to funding cuts and shortages related to the new aid agenda as well as from the withdrawal of various aid agencies from the country, MEC has had to significantly reduce its staff and rely more on volunteers to continue operations. MEC was unavailable to be interviewed due to staff constraints.



of elected leaders, and 3,000 voluntary promoters and community leaders (CAWN's website, accessed 13 Jan 2014).

#### **4.9.2. Results of the Project**

The project 'Promoting Civil and Economic Rights of Women in Nicaragua' involved capacity building in economic literacy for MEC's membership. The project aimed to bring an understanding of economic and trade issues, which enables women to promote and defend their interests, push for gendered laws, influence corporate, national and local government policy and practice, and seek to curb the negative effects of free trade agreements on women living in material poverty (Macleod, 2008). One of the project's most important successes was the empowerment it created in thousands of women through challenging stereotypes that decisions on the economy are limited to men. The project instigated greater participation of women in advocacy at local, national and international level on issues related to the economy (CAWN's website, accessed 13 Jan 2014). External evaluation findings point to a highly successful achievement for this project and, in some cases, surpassing of aims. The external evaluation found that this pilot project 'has been path-breaking for MEC: Economic Literacy is now a second pillar (along with Labour Rights) of MEC's work. Apart from fulfilling and surpassing project targets, it has paved the way for new organisational growth: deepening and widening economic literacy as a tool for participation, voice and advocacy, through more in-depth training (diploma course in Gender & Human Development) and capacity-building through the creation of a Leadership Academy. Economic Literacy, the evaluation found, has increased women's self-esteem, individual and collective empowerment, and has enhanced processes whereby women are consulted and get their interests included in local development plans and national policy' (Macleod, 2008).

#### **4.9.3. Assessing and Measuring Effectiveness**

Different from the Horizons' project described earlier and despite the fact that this project was begun in the same year that the new aid agenda came into force, this project was not bound by the same reporting expectations typical of the aid effectiveness approach (e.g. Results Based Management tools, etc.). This project was still considered to belong to the

funding cycle preceding the new aid effectiveness agenda approach, and it was thus situated in the transition period from the old to the new approach to reporting and measuring on results. While both CAWN and MEC learned about and prepared to adjust to the looming structural and practical changes to their organisations to fit in the new aid agenda requirements, CAWN assessed and measured the success of this project on the basis of the objectives the project was set to achieve. CAWN carried out an evaluation with MEC based on criteria stipulated by DFID. The criteria from DFID required CAWN to report on the project based on the following areas: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, replicability, and lessons learned. An external consultant was employed to conduct the exercise with MEC. This consultant was based out of Mexico, speaks both Spanish and English, and has knowledge and experience of the region.

As of MEC's own processes of monitoring and evaluation, which form the basis for reporting to CAWN, they include the celebration of Annual General Meetings. These typically gather about 1,500 women workers. They discuss and debate topics related to labour rights, sexual and reproductive health, violence against women, and relevant national policies from a gender perspective. Using participatory methods with multiple focus groups and dialogues, they also identified new issues, planned new initiatives and monitored and evaluated existing ones. In addition, MEC has a network of volunteer 'promoters' who work closely in the various communities and regularly check in with MEC's membership on the issues affecting them. These promoters regularly report to MEC's leadership on the status of its membership 'on the ground', on the on-going results of the projects and emerging issues. The reports from the promoters inform in part the final report of MEC to CAWN.

While this project was not necessarily bound to be evaluated with the new expectations of the aid effectiveness agenda, it should be noted that the environment in which this project was being carried out brought many tensions regarding the sustainability of this project's results and, in fact, the very relationship between CAWN and MEC. In the interview, CAWN spoke of the uncertainty surrounding the continuity of its work with MEC as the new criteria for funding was becoming known during the time the project was taking place. The fact that aid money was going to be channelled primarily through the Nicaraguan government immediately raised questions as to whether these funds were going to be accessible to



fund grass-roots organisations like MEC, considering the history of relations between the Nicaraguan government and women's organisations. Speaking about the impact of the aid effectiveness approach to gender equality work, the interviewee pointed out:

The main thing that has affected women's organisations in Latin America is that now it is much harder to get funding. Getting funding is much more difficult. There is less interest in funding projects in Latin America so that's why we look at the European Union but it is very difficult to get that funding. (interview with CAWN, 17 February, 2014)

CAWN on its part is a very small organisation and is being pushed to seek funding for its work elsewhere as Nicaragua is no longer going to be a country of priority for DFID. This has forced CAWN to look for EU funding which is more competitive, harder to get and the new funding model make it less accessible to small organisations like they are.

Now they require you to have collaboration across the EU involving many partners and a very large amount of money so it is a struggle. And also it is the projects that we do, so it is very difficult to align advocacy type of project, for instance, with effectiveness because quite often it is difficult to say whether advocacy is going to result in a change legislation or contribute to policy. And there is less interest in funding advocacy type of work. So it is a struggle. (interview with CAWN, 17 February 2014)

Speaking about what CAWN and other organisations are doing to challenge or work with the changes brought about by aid effectiveness approach, the interviewee promptly suggested that there are divisions on this. She referred to Bond as the lead (NGDO membership) agency working with issues of overseas development but she wasn't sure that it was challenging the aid agenda as such. Big agencies, she said, are sitting well with the changes because they get large block grants from the government. Governments, she says, are less interested in funding small organisations. The interviewee subsequently pointed:

Years ago, it was all about participation and supporting the community and now it is all about service provision and value for money. I worked sometime ago as a freelance consultant for Save the Children and really for them gender is a technical thing, you have to get gender in there... For me, effectiveness is much more about transformation, about empowering women. (interview with CAWN, 17 February 2014)

To this day, CAWN is dealing with the uncertainties brought in by the new aid environment and it has applied to lottery funds to continue its operations. CAWN spoke of the likelihood of having to close down operations as a result of its lack of access to funds should they not

get the lottery funds. This potential closure will inevitably hurt both MEC and CAWN's other partners in Central America who rely on DFIF/CAWN for their funding, work relationships and access to the UK and European networks.

#### **4.10. Joint programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

**Joint programme:** *'From Rhetoric to Reality: Promoting Participation and Gender-sensitive Budgeting'*

**Funder:** MDG Achievement Fund

**Scope:** National level

**Aid recipient:** Government of Nicaragua

**Duration of the joint programme:** August 2008–August 2011

**Budget:** USD 8,000,000

##### **4.10.1. Introduction**

The MDG Fund was established in 2006, a year after the Paris Declaration was signed, by an agreement between the UNDP (on behalf of the UN system) and the government of Spain. The main objectives of the MDG Fund are: 1) to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs in target countries, 2) to boost the effectiveness of aid by promoting leadership and ownership of development programmes, and 3) to promote the 'One UN' concept, the consolidation and streamlining of the UN's work at country level to accelerate the implementation of development operations and avoid duplication. The MDG fund has a thematic area on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

According to the MDG Fund website and fact-sheets for Nicaragua, *'From Rhetoric to Reality: Promoting Participation and Gender-sensitive Budgeting'*, was conceptualised to contribute directly to the MDGs as well as to the objectives of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. As such, some parts of the resources available and the narrative generated for this joint programme are structured using the framework of the 5 principles of the Paris Declaration (ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability). Much of the available material focuses on the implementation aspects/processes of the joint programme (at the operational level) although the documentation



also offers details about gender equality/ development outcomes/ products. For the exploration of this case, I relied on the written records available online and on reports shared by a member of the MDG Fund staff. Unfortunately, multiple efforts to secure interviews with relevant personnel involved in the programme were not fruitful. However, the documentation available is detailed, and does provide sufficient information to answer the relevant questions at the heart of this research. The main documents used were: fact-sheets produced by the MDG-Fund, the mid-term review of the programme, the final report of the programme, letters/ communiqués between agencies, and the final (independent) evaluation report available online. Since this programme was not implemented by a single existing organisation (like the projects presented above), the study here is aimed at exploring the joint programme's approach to gender equality in aid effectiveness both in terms of implementation of the joint programme's structure and in terms of gender equality outcomes. First, this segment will provide an overview of the programme and its implementation in terms of its structural aspects (at the national level) according to the 5 principles of the Paris Declaration. Then, the subsequent segment will focus on the implementation of the programme at the municipal level and finally, the last segment will delineate the gender equality outcomes of the joint programme at the level of beneficiaries and well as the measures used to assess these.

#### **4.10.2. Joint programme Structure and Implementation**

*From Rhetoric to Reality: Promoting Participation and Gender-sensitive Budgeting* is a joint programme between 9 agencies of the UN system and the 10 government institutions of Nicaragua, including associates. It was funded with USD 8 million by the MDG Fund's thematic area on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and it is the first of its kind in Nicaragua. This 3 year programme which sought to support the implementation of Nicaragua's National Gender Equality Programme began in 2008 and finalised in 2012 (after a 9 month extension). The UN agencies involved were:

1. Leader agency for the UN agencies – United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
2. UNIFEM (now UN Women)
3. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
4. United Nations Development Fund (UNDP)

5. United Nations Children's Rights and Emergency Relief Organisation (UNICEF)
6. United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)
7. Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO)
8. International Labour Organisation (ILO)
9. World Food Programme (WFP)

The participating agencies from the Nicaraguan government were:

1. Leader agency for government institutions – 'Women's Institute' (INIM)
2. Ministry of Agropecuarian and Forestry Affairs (MAGFOR)
3. Ministry of labour (MITRAB)
4. Ministry of Health (MINSA)
5. Nicaraguan Institute of Municipal Development (INIFOM)
6. National Institute of Development Information (INIDE)
7. National Institute of Technology (INATEC)
8. Ministry of Treasury and Public Credit (MHCP)
9. Ministry of Development, Industry and Commerce (MIFIC)
10. Ministry of Family Affairs (INSS-MIFAMILIA)

Strategic associates with these agencies also included: the National Assembly of Nicaragua, and the regional and municipal governments. The joint programme was implemented in 15 municipalities<sup>55</sup> of Nicaragua (MDG Achievement Fund, 2010).

The aim of this joint programme was to increase the impact of the operationalisation of gender-sensitive public policies and budgeting in Nicaragua. The programme operated at 3 levels: 1) by 'integrating a gender perspective into national budgeting procedures, with particular emphasis on health and employment in order to lead the way towards a wider process for results and gender-based budgeting, 2) by strengthening the local development of 15 municipalities through the integration of the gender focus in the design and execution of municipal development plans and results-based budgets, and 3) by contributing to

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<sup>55</sup> Estelí, San Nicolás, Matagalpa, Tuma-La Dalia, Jinotega. Somoto, San José de Cusmapa, El Sauce, Achuapa, Jalapa, Dipilto, and two autonomous regions: Waspam and Bilwi (North) and La Cruz de Río Grande, and Bluefields (South).



women's empowerment in 15 municipalities through facilitation of access to better opportunities for decent productive work opportunities and social services which strengthen the participation of women in all areas of life' (MDG Achievement Fund, 2010).

The Joint programme had five decision-making bodies: the National Directorship Committee, the Coordination Commission, the Outcomes Committee, the Municipal Committee of Technical Coordination, and the Committee of Regional Operation.

As referred to above, the joint programme was operationalised to fit in accordance to the 5 principles of the Paris Declaration. Below is a description of the joint programme and through that framework as described in the final report of the Joint programme (2012).

*Ownership:* Being a gender-focused programme, this joint programme was envisioned to use a gender-based methodological approach in all areas. However, and contrary to participatory practices used in most gender-related work, the joint programme was initially designed by the UN and later presented to the Nicaraguan government with a limited time for that government's input. It is reported that the UN had 6 weeks to prepare the profile of the project and 4 weeks to obtain approval of the programme in order to validate, define activities and prepare the work plan. According to the mid-term evaluation report, there was not enough time to undertake a participative consultation process (MDG-Fund, 2010a). The Women's Secretariat of Nicaragua had a limited participation in the programme's design but only after the profile, expected outcomes, and indicators had been agreed upon and approved by the UN. The INIM – the Women's Ministry who subsequently led the programme's implementation – was not consulted (MDG-Fund, 2010a). But despite the fact that the project was not initially 'owned' by participating agencies, subsequent collaborative work between all agencies involved resulted in a significant level of ownership of the joint programme by the national government agencies (Flórez et al, 2012). An important part of this renewed sense of ownership can be attributed to the modifications to the existing joint programme led by the newly elected government of Nicaragua in order to match the new National Human Development Plan and the gender policies outlined therein with the joint programme. According to the final review of the programme, this modification of the initial -joint programme plan implied a new adaptation process to joint work between the Nicaraguan government and UN agencies. Under the modified plan

consultations with the 15 participating municipalities were held. At the time, 9 of the municipalities were holding elections so the programme was delayed as new people needed to be inducted into the process and on working with gender practices. Aside from the initial issues of ownership mentioned above, the final evaluation of the joint programme also noted that an important level of ownership in the use of gender practices by all parties involved had been eventually developed (Flórez et al, 2012: 31) although it noted that limits exist and particular cultural politics need to be followed up upon in the areas of the country with ethnic groups, the Caribbean Coast in particular (Florez et al, 2012: 16).

*Alignment:* Once the ownership issues had been overcome, the programme was aligned with some of Nicaragua's national priorities outlined in the national development plan by addressing some of the health, economic and political dimensions of Nicaragua's national human development plan (National Human Development Plan, 2009-2011). At the international level, the joint programme is, in rhetoric, aligned with CEDAW, the Interamerican Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará), and the American Convention on Human Rights (MDG Fund, 2010a). The documentation available on this programme state that both the government and the UN agencies focus on using gender practices as an intrinsic part of their approach. Despite its controversial record with breaching many women's human rights, the government is supposed to centre on practices towards the 'restitution' of human rights, while the UN agencies involved are supposed to use human rights as 'programming' principles (Flórez et al, 2012: 31).

*Harmonisation:* The joint nature of the Programme meant that work practices and lines of communications between government and UN agencies had to be synchronised, or in Paris Declaration terms 'harmonised', as a matter of practicality. In this respect, the experience of working jointly revealed many of the complexities of coordinating and harmonising work practices involving such high number of agencies. During the first year in particular a lack of coordination was reported in areas of the programme involving administrative tasks. According to the mid-term review report, amongst the main obstacles that influenced the pace of the project's implementation were the delays in disbursements of money, the application of different rules by different agencies, poor timing (municipal elections being



held at a time when programme should have started) and the frequent rotation of staff, including high level personnel (MDG-F, 2010a). Although there were difficulties in the coordination of the work and in attaining a sufficiently harmonised work practice, the joint programme is said to have eventually left 'natural alliances' between institutions with the necessary tools for further joint collaborative work. Better coordination practices and better relationships between UN agencies and national government institutions were reported as a positive result of the joint programme (Flórez et al, 2012: 31).

*Managing for Results:* In terms of 'managing for results' the joint programme's final evaluation recognises that this area depended on the contributions of both the UN and the government agencies and was better developed during the second half of the joint programme. At the operational and institutional level, it is reported that 'managing for results' still requires gender indicators to support the information systems at both municipal and national levels (Flórez et al, 2012: 31). No further information about the specific challenges here were found in the documentation and no one from the joint programme's staff has been available for interview (despite initial disposition and numerous attempts to follow up). It should be noted, however, that the final report of the programme generated in the same year, two months after the final evaluation, does state that gender indicators were developed at the municipality level for all municipalities (Flórez et al, 2012: 15).

*Mutual Accountability:* For this area, the fact that all the agencies and institutions involved have assigned matching funds and measures to sustain the results of the joint programme is seen as an expression of 'mutual accountability' (Flórez et al, 2012).

From the implementation process, the following practices are described in the mid-term evaluation (2010) and the final report (2012) as positive:

1. The joint formulation of the joint programme's design provides coherence between the programme's strategies and the development of government policies. The joint planning and coordination developed by the Coordinating Commission, its working groups and teams and the joint work carried out at the regional level were reported as positive work modalities.

2. A strong leadership role by Nicaragua's Women National Institute (INIM) exercised and assumed with a vision of empowerment, which was recognised by the joint programme's beneficiaries, participating institutions and municipalities.
3. The high level of performance of the Coordinating Unit of the joint programme facilitated the processes that guaranteed the fulfilment of commitments and similar high levels of performance from the part of the participating institutions and agencies.
4. The presence of the programme in distant and rural communities, and in the Caribbean Coast and the subsequent establishment of a regional office were positive to ensure women's participation and engagement, and results in that region.
5. The creation of a Sustainability Strategy for the results of the joint programme. This legitimated and provided support for the approval of a 9 month extension period.

At the regional level and at the level of the municipalities participating in the programme, many good practices were reported in the course of the 3 years, some of which are considered to have contributed to the sustainability of the joint programme's results (Florez et al, 2012: 31-33). Some worth highlighting are:

1. The creation and operationalisation of a Municipal Investment Fund for Gender Equality in all 15 municipalities.
2. The mutual accountability exercised between: a) the municipalities and the Nicaraguan Institute of Municipal Development (INIFOM) which facilitated the implementation of 100% of the investment funds, and b) the regional offices and the coordination unit of the joint programme.
3. The establishment of 'advanced processes' for the institutionalisation of gender practices, which include the creation of 'gender units' in 9 out of the 13 participating government institutions at their central level, supported with budgets, defined work priorities and placed at the highest levels of decision making in the following institutions: Ministry of Labour (MITRAB), Ministry of Treasury and Public Credit (MHCP), Health Ministry (MINSAs), Ministry of Farming, Stockbreeding and Forestry (MAGFOR), Ministry of Development, Industry and Commerce (MIFIC), National



Institute of Technology (INATEC), Nicaraguan Institute of Small and Medium Enterprise (INPYME), and the Ministry of the Family (MIFAN).

4. Contribution to laws and legal initiatives to incorporate gender practices, such as the Law of Municipal Reform and the proposal to reform the Law of Government Budget.

However, an important area that was reported as having 'different results' is that of addressing gender equality and gender practices in accordance to the cosmologies of the various indigenous and ethnic groups. The joint project reporting records claim to have promoted 'gender rights' considering the ethnic discriminations faced by mestizos, creoles, mayagnas and Miskito populations. A 'common gender language' was found with these groups despite the linguistic differences, apparently. This was attributed to the work done with each group to 'unify a vision' about the practical and strategic needs of women (Florez et al, 2012: 16). Documents and capacity building material were translated from Spanish into English Creole, Miskito and Mayagna while also working with the relevant local organisations and regional government. Despite these actions, the report identifies the indigenous area as 'pending' and as one for which understanding needs to be deepened.

#### **4.10.3. Gender and Effectiveness**

In this segment, this study explores and seeks to identify how gender and effectiveness were defined and approached in the joint programme. Consideration is given to work practices on the measurement of effectiveness based on gender equality outcomes. The purpose is to identify good practices and positive elements of measuring effectiveness in gender-sensitive ways which could inform future gender-sensitive indicators of aid effectiveness.

The conceptual framework of the joint programme reflects a holistic vision of gender equality. For example, in its different dimensions the programme takes into account the health, economic and political aspects of gender equality. The documents available point to a recognition that 'responding to the causes of gender inequality such as 'machismo' and 'patriarchy' is a long term process that goes well beyond a small 3 year fund like the Gender Equality Fund of the MDG-Fund' (MDG-Fund, 2010a: 18).

One of the striking features of this programme approach to measuring effectiveness evidenced by its monitoring and reporting documents is the clarity of the terminology used. Contrary to the Paris Declaration itself where no definition of effectiveness is provided, there is a clearly stated distinction between what constitutes 'effectiveness' and 'efficiency', and these two areas are assessed separately. 'Efficiency' is defined as the extent to which resources (time, funds, etc) have been turned into results. 'Effectiveness' refers to the extent to which development objectives have been or / are hopefully going to be met taking into account their relative importance. The joint programme takes into account two other areas in its monitoring and reporting: 'relevance', referring to the extent to which the development objectives are congruent with the needs and interests of the people, the country's needs, the MDGs and the policies of both donors and 'associates'. And the last area of monitoring and measurement where clarity of terms is visible, 'sustainability', deals with the probability that the *benefits* of the intervention will continue in the long term (MDG Fund, 2010a). The final report provides an analysis of its results in the framework of each of the previously mentioned areas.

In terms of how gender equality is approached by this project relative to the above mentioned definition of effectiveness, and following from the discussion initiated in chapter 2 where a divided approach to gender equality was highlighted (economic/ technocratic approach versus a human rights based approach) the nature of programmes and projects supported in this joint programme point to a particular mix of approaches to gender equality which address both a human rights and economic empowerment of women. The segments below illustrate details of the programme's outcomes, outputs and activities carried out. Further commentary and analysis of their significance will be provided in the following chapter.

#### **4.10.4. Joint programme's results**

In terms of how gender equality is approached by this project, the nature of programmes and projects supported in this joint programme point to a mixture of approaches to gender equality balancing both a human rights-driven understanding of gender equality, and actions that emphasize the economic empowerment for women. The following segment



summarises the main outcomes and outputs of the joint programme (MDG-F, 2012: 5). The segment will be followed by 3 tables outlining the specific activities that led to such outcomes.

*Outcome 1:* the capacities of women were strengthened in the 15 municipalities for their empowerment and participation in economic, political and social areas.

*Related outputs:*

1.1 Increased access for women to capacity building, decent work opportunities, credit, and food security in all 15 municipalities,

1.2 Increased access for women to services of sexual and reproductive health and the prevention and attention to violence against women,

1.3 Stronger participation and advocacy capacity of local actors was promoted through social mobilisation efforts with emphasis on women's participation at the level of the People's Councils and other relevant political spaces at the local level including: processes of formulation and monitoring of municipal plans and municipal budgets, and the incorporation of women's demands in all 15 municipalities.

*Outcome 2:* Incorporation of a gender focus in the formulation and implementation of municipal development plans and results-based budgets in the 15 municipalities.

*Related outputs:*

2.1 Stronger capacities of local actors for the incorporation of gender-based practices in the design, implementation and follow up of plans, and results-based budgets in the 15 municipalities.

2.2 All 15 municipalities now possess Information Systems for monitoring and evaluating gender practices in the municipal plans and budgets for accountability, and social audits.

*Outcome 3:* Incorporation of gender practices in national policies and budgets, particularly in the policies and budgets of the Health and Labour Ministries, in order to guarantee the enactment of human rights approaches in these areas, and to diminish violence against women.

*Related outputs:*

3.1 Incorporation of a gender focus in the design and implementation of results-based budgets at the national level.

3.2 Incorporation of gender practices in the results-based planning and budgeting in the Health and Labour Ministries with measurable results and indicators.

3.3 The analytical capacities for the generation, use, monitoring and evaluation of gender indicators in the National Statistical system have been strengthened.

The next 3 tables are reproduced from the final evaluation of the joint programme (Flórez, 2012: 10-14). They outline the outcomes and outputs of the joint programme in terms of activities and the specific initiatives carried out.

**Outcome 1:** The capacities of women were strengthened in the 15 municipalities for their empowerment and participation in economic, political and social areas.

The capacities of 9,595 women were strengthened in the areas of decent work, production, food security, sexual and reproductive health, and their effective citizenship participation in the municipal arena.

**Output 1.1 – Increased access for women to capacity building for decent work opportunities, credit, and food security in all 15 municipalities**

- 1,149 women benefited from the credit fund, which brought economic income to their families and fomented their money management capacities with benefits to their micro-enterprises. An additional 80% of the initial 617 expected beneficiaries were reached.
- 528 beneficiaries received conditional credit transfers thus securing a basic food supply for their homes and strengthening women's practices with capacity building and assistance with good practices in agriculture. An additional 23% to the original goal of 428 beneficiaries were reached.
- 804 women have developed various vocational capacities with gender equality. They were also assisted in the organisation of small businesses and generated incomes for their families. There was not a particular goal identified for this result and it is considered 'value added' aspect during the execution of the vocational training.



- 250 women developed their capacities in the use of Windows and the internet using 14 computer classrooms built by the Joint programme. Some of the women used their new knowledge in support of their small businesses. This initiative resulted in the 67.5% achievement rate of the original goal.
- 163 school gardens in the same number of schools were re-activated, benefiting 20,310 boys and girls, and complemented by additional nutritional and food supplements. The gardens represented the 113% achievement rate of the original goal and the number of children benefiting from them tripled the original goal 6,330.
- The initial goal of habilitating 6 'Child Development Centres' (CDI) was more than doubled. Fourteen CDIs were rehabilitated and 27 more were equipped benefiting 5,800 children. These CDIs accounted with special technical assistance in design and capacity development of the personnel in a new curriculum. Various CDIs were supported by agreements with the municipalities and some were supported by the private sector.

**Output 1.2** – Increased access for women to services of sexual and reproductive health, and of prevention and attention to violence against women in 15 municipalities

- 8,781 women benefited from care in sexual and reproductive health, including victims of violence. This represented 5 times the initial goal of 1,800 women.
- The creation of community networks for the attention and prevention of violence involved 481 women and 284 men. This resulted in a network called 'Men allied with women's health' in the 15 municipalities participating in the Joint programme, as well as in positive changes in behaviour in their families. These numbers represented an additional 70% of the initial goal of 450 men and women to reach.
- Capacity building activities resulted in 1,110 people capacitated in the theme of 'masculinities', including personnel of the Ministry of Health and community couples.
- The rehabilitation and equipment of 14 'maternal houses' that served as shelters to more than 600 women who were able to give birth safely. This was a significant contribution to the goal of improving maternity health and reducing child mortality. This initiative did not have an initial goal but resulted in great benefits for the women and the community.

**Output 1.3** – Stronger participation and advocacy capacity of local actors through social mobilisation efforts with emphasis in women's participation at the level of the People's Councils and other relevant political spaces at the local level including: processes of formulation and

monitoring of municipal plans and municipal budgets, and the incorporation of women's demands in all 15 municipalities.

- Capacity building for a network of 'gender equality promoters' with courses of more than 40 hours in 13 participating municipalities. Through this initiative the Women's National Institute ensured the functioning of the gender networks of these municipalities and the increased active participation of women in the various processes at the municipal level.
- The elaboration of a national advocacy strategy and 13 municipal plans for advocacy in public policy with gender practices, with which a consciousness was developed amongst decision-makers on the importance of gender practices in their institutions and in the communities for leadership and change/ modification of behaviours.
- With these results and a social mobilisation vastly supported by local authorities, the results here surpassed the goal of 3,560 women participating in the process. The following points illustrate achievements that surpassed this goal by as much as 32 times.
- 113,814 women participated in consultations on gender budgets and local gender policies which became a parameter of the levels of mobilisation and active participation developed by the Joint programme.  
1,640 producers capacitated to advocate with their projects in the municipal budgets. This was an important step to mobilise support from the local governments for the economic development of women producers.

**Outcome 2:** Incorporation of gender-sensitive practices in the formulation and implementation of municipal development plans and results-based budgets in the 15 municipalities.

The life conditions of 9,728 women were improved as a result of the incorporation of gender-sensitive practices in the formulation and development of plans, projects and budgets in all 15 municipalities.

**Output 2.1** Stronger capacities of local actors on the incorporation of gender based practices in the design, implementation and follow up of plans and results-based budgets in the 15 municipalities

- Creation of the Gender Equality Investment Fund with a contribution of \$211,664 from the Joint programme, \$104,507 from municipal budgets and \$40,227 from the



community. This mechanism was not originally forecasted and sets a precedent on voluntary synergies for collaborative/ shared responsibilities frameworks.

- 32 projects for women, co-financed by the 15 municipalities reflecting the direct commitment of these to concrete results. While this only surpassed the initial goal of 30 projects by 2, the amount of beneficiaries was an unforeseeable almost 100,000.
- Awareness raising and capacity building on methodologies to incorporate gender in municipal budgets for 483 women and 389 men in the 15 participating municipalities. The initial goal was to reach 600 men and women and the actual result was 145% of this.
- Incorporation of gender practices in municipal investment, municipal budgets, and the municipal performance evaluation system.
- 14 ordinances have officialised the application of the corresponding [gender] methodology (93% fulfilled) and, with these instruments, 1,345 municipal civil servants have been capacitated, almost 7 times the 200 initially foreseen.
- 443 female leaders negotiated proposals with municipal governments that were incorporated in the local budgets, which has positioned them as community leaders. This number represents a 147% of the initial goal.
- Incorporation of the methodology of gender practices for the planning, programming and budgeting in municipalities into the Law of Municipal Reform. Such reform will allow its application with legal mandate in all of the municipalities in Nicaragua.

**Output 2.2** All 15 municipalities now account with municipal Information Systems for monitoring and evaluating gender practices in the municipal plans and budgets for accountability, and social audits.

- The Municipal Information System (SIM) for the monitoring and evaluation of gender practices in the plans, budgets, accountability and social audits is under development. The advances in this matter do not yet offer effective support to develop public policies and the functioning of such system must be completed.

**Outcome 3** Incorporation of gender practices in national policies and budgets, particularly in the policies and budgets of the Health and Labour Ministries, in order to guarantee the

enactment of human rights in these areas (health and labour), the economic autonomy of women and the decrease of violence against women.

Relevant advances in the institutionalization of gender practices highlighting: gender analysis of the general budget of the republic, methodologies to incorporate gender practices in the budgets of the Health Ministry and Labour Ministry. Eight municipal public policies on gender have been institutionalised.

**Output 3.1** Incorporation of gender practices in the management and implementation of public resources.

- Matching funds now exist for the Gender Unit in the Ministry of Treasury and Public Credit as a reflection of the institutionalisation of gender practices in this institution and which influence all participating institutions.
- A methodology now exists for the incorporation of gender practices in the General Budget of the republic.
- A register of gender-sensitive Indicators has been developed in the Financial Follow up System (SISEF).
- Gender now features in the budget policies of the General Budget of the Republic.
- The personnel of the Ministry of Treasury and Public Credit received capacity building to assist in the implementation of gender practices at a larger scale.
- Eight public policies on gender were formulated with the participation of diverse local actors, setting the basis to develop sectoral and multi-sectoral territorial plans and strategies with gender practices
- Seven municipal Gender Commissions were institutionalised in Japala, Dipilto, Jinotega, Estelí, San Nicolás, Chuapa, and El Sauce with multi-sectoral coordinating role in matters of gender practice.
- A regional policy on gender was elaborated and approved in the Autonomous Region of the North Atlantic and the Autonomous Region of the South Atlantic of Nicaragua.
- Provision of awareness raising and capacity building activities for 33 deputies of the Economic Commission (13 women and 20 men), and 87 members of the technical staff and National Assembly (67 women and 20 men).

**Output 3.2** Incorporation of gender practices in the results-based planning and budgeting in the Health and Labour Ministries, which were made operational with measurable results and indicators.



- Methodology to incorporate gender practices in the Ministries of Health and Labour. This methodology has been validated and allows for consideration in the territorial delegations.
- Incorporation of gender indicators into the Budgetary Information systems of the Ministries of Health and Labour.
- Reports of budgetary performance in the Ministries of Health and Labour are now disaggregated by sex as a norm and a validated functional procedure.
- Civil servants of the Ministries of Health and Labour are now capacitated to incorporate gender in planning and budgeting activities. They account with the necessary skills to deepen on this strategy.

**Output 3.3** The analytical capacities of the National Statistics System for the generation, use, monitoring and evaluation of gender indicators in the implementation of public policies have been strengthened.

- There were few achievements in these areas and the support of public policies with this focus is still lacking

Some of the good practices identified in the execution of the above mentioned activities in terms of results are (Flórez et al, 2012: 32):

1. The development of materials, methodologies and instruments valid for diverse scales and environments, such as booklets in the various national languages, technical manuals, gender policies at the municipal levels, methodologies of plans and municipal budgets related to the general national budget and medium term general budget.
2. The coordinated delivery of 'goods and services' for the empowerment of the beneficiaries resulting in personal, familiar and communal benefits in economic terms and in terms of health and food security as well as in stronger citizen participation in the programmes.
3. The organisation of festivals to promote the products of the micro-enterprises, coordinated between the institutions and with participation of the programme's beneficiaries.
4. The creation of mobile units to deliver courses for isolated communities to ensure benefits reach the beneficiaries.

5. The visits headed by the Health Ministry (MINSA) to the different regions (coordinated between different institutions) to deliver 'goods and services' to the beneficiaries.
6. The formation of a network of 41 Centres of Infant Development in the 15 municipalities, which are equipped with infrastructure, equipment, curriculum, personnel with capacities on gender-sensitive practices. Some of the City Council offices offered matching funds for these centres.
7. Staff knowledgeable on protocols for the detection, attention and prevention of violence, and a network of males in alliance with women's health.
8. The creation of 7 Gender Units with budgets from the local governments of Jalapa, Dipilto, Jinotega, Estelí, San Nicolás, Chuapa and El Sauce in charge of the coordination of Gender Commissions for joint work with gender practices (at municipal level).
9. The establishment of a regional office in the Caribbean Coast to coordinate gender practices in the governments of that region.
10. The elaboration and approval of 8 municipal policies related to gender in Jalapa, Somoto, San José de Cusmapa, Tuma la Dalia, Dipilto, Bluefields, Puerto Cabezas and Chuapa (but is foreseen that all political parties will require sensitization to the importance of these as municipal elections are frequent to ensure sustainability).
11. The establishment of dialogue mechanisms between men and women with the local institutions to promote citizens' participation (local forums and local chapters).

Some of salient gender equality development results attained and good practices at the level of beneficiaries are as follows:

1. According to the final (independent) report of the joint programme many of the above mentioned outputs and outcomes resulted in what is termed 'holistic empowerment'. That is, in the personal-intimate level (self-esteem, leadership), family level (capacity to dialogue and to negotiate), at the economic level (access to credit, improvements in enterprises and businesses, business and technological capacities of beneficiaries, employment and income), at the socio-family level (food



security, attention to sexual and reproductive health, infant care) and at the political level (women's participation in community assemblies, local chapters, gender advocates with positions in community organisations and women with aspirations to run for elections) (Florez et al, 2012: 36).

2. The involvement of males in the capacity building and sensitization processes, which had a positive effect on households: mutually shared responsibilities, decrease in violence, and new values built between their partners and families.

3. The development of a network of gender advocates for the empowerment, mobilisation and participation of women, and their incorporation in peoples' councils (organizaciones de poder ciudadano).

4. Creation of a movement of males in alliance with women's health and against intra-familial violence.

#### **4.10.5. Assessing and measuring results**

In terms of practices and mechanisms that were used by the institutions involved in the joint programme to monitor, assess and measure the results of the joint programme, these were devised collectively by the agencies and institutions involved in the joint programme. Such mechanisms and practices included: exchanges (of experiences and information) between communities, use of institutional annual operational plans, focus groups, interviews and visits to the communities. In addition, all the institutions carried out follow up activities through the municipal Gender Commissions, inter-institutional gatherings, computerised monitoring exercises, joint field visits, assistance and direct escort of beneficiaries (Flórez et al, 2012: 19).

There has not been an impact assessment of this joint programme's results (Flórez et al, 2012) but the final review states that a favourable generalised opinion exists that this programme and the joint work modality has advantageous results. This mode of working for gender equality did not exist before in Nicaragua and the subsequent interventions that have been developed so far are a result of this programme's influence (Florez et al, 2012).

## Chapter 5. Analysis of Findings

### 5.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to further investigate and analyse the findings presented in chapter four. The analysis will be guided by the thesis' theoretical framework on Feminist Political Economy, but drawing more purposefully on its Gender and Development, Feminist Economics, and Feminist Epistemological dimensions. The aim is to deal with the hypothesis and research questions outlined in the introduction of the thesis, the last three questions in particular, which I situate here for clarity.

The chapter proceeds as follows: first, I address the limitations of the indicators set out in the Paris Declaration in direct response to the thesis' research question: What are the limitations, from a gender-sensitive viewpoint, of current indicators of aid effectiveness? While the thesis has already dealt with many of the shortcomings of these indicators, the analysis under the section 'Limitations of the Paris Declaration Indicators' focuses exclusively on how such shortcomings unfold in the Nicaraguan case. Second, I reflect upon the thesis' hypothesis and discuss it in the context of Nicaragua and the research findings. This reflection, under the segment 'From the global to the local: an ongoing tension', is inevitably intertwined with research question: 'could existing gender-related indicators, such as GII, be useful in measuring aid effectiveness?' Lastly, I proceed to deal with the remaining research question of the thesis, namely: What elements could characterise gender-sensitive indicators of aid effectiveness? in the section entitled 'Possibilities through women's agency'. It is here where the main contribution of the thesis shall be situated. The chapter aims to identify the elements that characterise gender-sensitive indicators of aid effectiveness based on evidence from the research findings. As with the previous chapter, it should be noted that where the text uses quotations from the documentation or interviews held in Spanish, the entire quote in that language will be used followed by an English translation. This is to preserve the integrity of the message in its original language and for the benefit of potential bilingual readers of these languages.



### Hypothesis

*Gender-related indicators such as the Gender Inequality Index must be essential to measuring aid effectiveness because of their emphasis on capturing inequalities between men and women in key areas addressed by development goals (reproductive health, political, and economic participation).*

## 5.2. Limits of the Paris Declaration indicators

According to the methodological note of the Paris Declaration, the indicators of progress and targets spelled out in that document are meant for countries to make their commitments operational. Based on the findings outlined in the previous chapter, I will argue that the Paris Declaration indicators help construct a specifically neoliberal and very partial form of knowledge about aid effectiveness that perpetuates the invisibility of women and the gender dimensions of aid and, in fact, recreate the conditions for more gender inequality. This makes for a deeply complex positioning of Nicaragua in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America, which, imperfect as it is, remains an alternative to the capitalist world. While Nicaragua appears as anti-neoliberal in its discourses and indeed in many of its actions, this does not seem to translate into forging an entirely anti-capitalist society. While the PD indicators constrain Nicaragua from its anti-neoliberal goals, the country's ALBA related structures and measures make it possible to exert some kind of resistance to the neoliberal project. Below, I continue my focus on the aid agenda and outline three main limitations of the Paris Declaration indicators revealing different layers of oppression on the ground:

### 5.2.1. First Limitation

*Difficult 'framework conditions' undermine transformative, long term approaches to gender equality and weaken feminist organisations*

One of the ironies of the new approach to aid effectiveness used by donor and aid recipient governments alike to fund civil society organisations is that it has resulted in the weakening of critical areas of gender equality work (such as VAW) and the very existence of women's and feminist organisations. A number of reports produced by women's rights organisations

point to this trend manifesting in various countries in Central America (see for example, Arutyunova and Clark, 2013; CAWN, 2008). At the heart of this irony lie two underestimated aspects of Nicaragua's unique socio-political landscape: a) the political context framing the divide between government and civil society / feminist organisations, and the politisation of gender equality by religious groups, and b) the way in which the new aid approach to funding civil society organisations, including women's organisations, is carried out. I call these areas 'difficult framework conditions' where the aid agenda is inserted. In GAD terms, these are 'influencing factors' that press upon, shape, and change gender relations in a given society (Parpart, Conelly and Barriteau, 2000).

#### *A. Political Context*

Besides the tensions generated by the case of Ortega's stepdaughter with feminist groups described in the previous chapter, and the ideological divisions regarding 'feminist' and 'feminine' conceptualisations of women's emancipation within the Sandinista party, the role of donors in supporting the creation of an independent civil society during the structural adjustment era in Nicaragua deserve expansion here. This type of donor support played an influential part in the dynamics between government and women's organisations that currently hinder aid money going towards the gender equality agenda. According to Hunt (2012) back then donors put a lot of pressure on the government to carry out consultations with civil society in order to comply with World Bank and IMF criteria for a satisfactory Poverty Reduction Strategy process. Donors are reported to have 'crowded out' political spaces and to have highly influenced the selection of participants ensuring that those whom they funded were included in what was largely a top down process (national platforms, NGO networks). This was done bypassing Parliament and other sides of government while leaving Trade Unions, Women's groups and the poor underrepresented. Besides fomenting a divisive environment and alienating key areas of society – government representatives and CSOs from each other – this selective approach to 'creating an independent civil society' highly influenced the climate of distrust from the part of the current government towards CSOs who are seen as representing donors' (neoliberal) agendas. In this sense, and considering the revolutionary history of Nicaragua and that of foreign interventions in the country, President Ortega has legitimate reasons to distrust foreign funding for CSOs / interventions in Nicaraguan society.



Linked to the previous, another factor worth highlighting here for its role in influencing where aid money is allocated is the power of religious institutions in shaping government policies on women. This influence has been particularly visible in recent legal setbacks on reproductive rights and on violence against women (where foreign donor funding has become vital). While abortion had been illegal in Nicaragua for many years, therapeutic abortion was normally allowed in cases where the mother's life was at risk. Very close to the general elections in 2006, after much pressure from the Catholic Church and religious groups in direct antagonism with feminists, Ortega (now turned Christian) and his Sandinista party (the Opposition at the time) bizarrely voted with government to institute a total ban on abortion. This vote, largely seen as a strategic move from his part to obtain the Christian votes needed to win what was deemed a close call election, went against Ortega's previous history of supporting therapeutic abortion. Since the total ban on abortion went into effect, foreign funding for Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights in Nicaragua is controversial and organisations working on such rights are at risk. A case in point is that of Oxfam in Managua. In what was reported as a 'witch hunt' against NGOs, newspaper articles revealed that Oxfam was falsely accused of money laundering while other NGOs, especially feminists, have seen their offices raided by the police (Bataillon, 2008). Cannon and Kirby (2012) reported that NGOs believe this hostility to be rooted on these organisations' previous support for the President's stepdaughter's case of sexual abuse. Rosario Murillo, the President's wife, is on record labelling these organisations' foreign funding 'los fondos del mal' (the funds of evil). This type of rhetoric is not limited to the abortion issue. It has also been used by religious representatives in the context of the new Law 779 on Violence against Women. Notoriously, the Catholic Bishop labelled it 'Law 666' alluding to the 'anti-Christ', claiming that it destroyed families and undermined Christian values. The Law, largely the product of the long term work of women's organisations, intended to eliminate the possibility of mediation as this process has proved to exacerbate VAW in Nicaragua. Shortly after it was enacted, and largely due to pressure from religious institutions, Law 779 was reformed to re-insert 'mediation' in some cases despite the proven fact that 30% of women who participated in such processes had been subsequently killed by their partners (in 2012). It is reported that during the Parliamentary debate on this reform, no legal arguments were made by anyone from a human rights' perspective. Rather, arguments centred on women's obligations to preserve the family unit (Solís, 2013). The amendment to Law 779 was passed almost unilaterally with minimal

opposition signalling the power of moral/ religious considerations embedded in the decision making process in regards to this issue. Since the government does not feel compelled to look at these issues from a rights and entitlements perspective, such considerations influence the likelihood of accounting for (and funding) civil society organisations that seek to continue working on VAW and also on sexual health and reproductive rights through input in the national development plans. The exercise of power of religious institutions over state matters related to women's human rights is part of a wider trend of what is termed the rise of religious fundamentalisms.

Religious fundamentalisms have been referred to as one of the many 'fundamentalist political projects that actively resist and obstruct the promotion of women's equality and rights' (Reilly, 2009). A significant factor on the rise of religious fundamentalisms is the backlash against women's increased autonomy and improvements in status that many women around the world have been able to attain, and the increased recognition of new human rights instruments (Balchin, 2008). Very active at the grassroots, regional, and international levels, these political movements use sophisticated technologies and strategies to detain or hamper gains on women's human rights at the state and international level. These movements have often co-opted the language of rights and gender justice, which only highlights the need for progressive women's rights movements to devise ever more creative methods of resistance (Balchin, 2008). The Nicaraguan case illustrates what Muñoz Cabrera (2010) calls 'entangled ideologies' referring to the interaction between patriarchy, masculinity, religious fundamentalisms and the perpetuation of violence against women. See Muñoz Cabrera (2010) for a review of these debates in the context of Latin America.

#### *B. Funding and aid management framework for Civil Society Organisations:*

The new competitive bidding processes used by donors to allocate funds to organisations means that only those working on the issues or geographical areas considered priority for funders are eligible to apply. This part of the findings would not have been visible through the sole study of indicators of aid effectiveness or the official documentation on aid effectiveness produced by the OECD. Both of the interviews carried out with Horizons and CAWN revealed that it is the competitive bidding framework that is hurting women's organisations the most since the onset of the new aid approach (interview with Horizons,



November 2013; interview with CAWN, February 2014). The short term time frames afforded by the calls for proposals, both in terms of when these calls are announced and the length of time for which funding is provided, pose difficulties to carry out adequate gender planning with local communities. This has had consequences for AMICA at the local level in Nicaragua who are in constant need to apply for funding from the same funder as they are under 'year to year' project cycles with Horizons. This also means AMICA spends a disproportionate amount of time dealing with administrative tasks related to the application process as opposed to dedicating the core of their time for the actual development work. Further, the changing nature of each individual call means that there is no guarantee that a programme or project will be funded sustainably in the long term. For example, since DFID decided that Nicaragua was no longer a priority country for UK aid, funding for CAWN and its local partners is not an option regardless of the status of current projects, the long term relationships built and the consequences to local organisations. In order to survive as an organisation and continue to support their Nicaragua based partners, CAWN is applying for Lottery funds which are very hard to get. Funding from the EU is practically unmanageable for such a small organisation considering the large amounts of money involved, and the lengthy and onerous application process. In the case of Horizons and its partner AMICA, a senior staff of Horizons observed:

There hasn't been a call [for proposals] in two years that we could have applied for[...] Many of the calls for proposals have been thematic and we would not have been able to apply to them. They're either geographically focused or they're focused on an existing idea such as the Extraction Industry or another focus...we wouldn't have been able to apply. It is kind of restricting us because they have set their agenda. (interview with Horizons, 7 November 2013)

Despite their diversified funding strategy and relative stability, Horizons spoke of the challenge of keeping their programmes running in Central America. If this funding trend continues, it is likely that they will have to withdraw support from some of their existing programmes (even though Canada rhetorically continues to support this country).

There are two relevant points emerging from this area of difficulty which amount to two further 'difficult framework conditions'. The first relates to the expectations from funders regarding the use of specific aid management techniques and reporting, and second, the way in which aid money is being used to further entrench mainstream neoliberal activities

that produce and reproduce current gender inequalities. On the first point, as was outlined in the findings, the new aid landscape has required organisations to use 'results-based management' frameworks in their operations. According to the Guide to Results Based Management (RBM) of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), RBM is defined as:

... a life-cycle approach to management that integrates strategy, people, resources, processes, and measurements to improve decision-making, transparency, and accountability. The approach focuses on achieving outcomes, implementing performance measurement, learning and adapting, as well as reporting performance. (DFATD Guide to RBM tools, [www. http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/acdi-cida.nsf/eng/nat-92213444-n2h](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/acdi-cida.nsf/eng/nat-92213444-n2h), accessed 30 June 2014)

There are three main RBM working tools used by DFATD, but also by other donors: the logic model, the performance measurement framework, and the risk register. The logic model (LM) is meant to show the *causal relationships* between inputs, activities, outputs and the outcomes of a given policy or program. All three are intended to be used following participatory processes. The LM is comprised of six levels: inputs, activities, outputs, immediate outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and ultimate outcomes. The first three levels are associated with how a project or programme is implemented, whereas the latter three are associated with the changes taking place (the development results). According to the LM, a result defined as 'a describable or measurable *change* that is derived from a cause and effect relationship' (DFATD, 2013, emphasis mine). This linear cause-effect approach can help establish links between certain results as direct consequence of specific planned actions but does assume that change occurs in a linear traceable fashion. This assumption leaves behind the role of context or the possibility that change can take place in non-linear manners. The focus on measuring change as such (as a good result) also leaves behind the possibility that maintaining past gains (i.e. no change) can be a sign of the success of an intervention. For example, if respect for the right to access therapeutic abortion had been maintained in Nicaragua, it could have been considered a positive result in the midst of such challenging political environment with respect to sexual health and reproductive rights. The second aspect of RBM, the performance measurement framework, is a structured plan for the collection and analysis of information related to the project or programme being implemented. It is undertaken on a continual basis in order to provide up to date information to managers on resources, extent of reach and progress towards



achieving outputs and outcomes. DFATD has a standard template, which includes a column for performance indicators that is commonly used by those receiving funds from that agency. The performance indicators can be qualitative or quantitative. Such performance indicators are described by the DFATD Guide (2013) as 'units of measurement that indicate what is to be measured along a scale or dimension but that are neutral'. The DFATD guide further specifies that such indicators are neutral because they 'neither indicate a direction or change nor do they embed a target' (DFATD, 2013). Finally, the risk register is meant to serve as part of a risk management strategy whereby the most important risks of a programme or project are listed as well as the results of their analysis, and risk-response strategies. The DFATD Guide on RBM describes aid effectiveness and good management as the drivers of risk management (DFATD, 2013). It is notable that the DFATD Guide uses corporate language throughout the entire document, where aid projects and programmes are referred to as 'investments' and results monitored by 'performance' based on 'corporate strategies' accounting for 'risk management', and the like. This use of language and the subsequent restructuring of NGO practices along corporate-type approach speaks of the kind of restructuring of the state and state practices typical of neoliberalism discussed in chapter one.

As an organisational approach to aid management, RBM has previously been criticised for being inadequate to monitor and measure complex interventions and issues because of its tendency towards simplification and quantification (O'Dwyer and Unerman, 2008; Ebrahim, 2003). Following Ackerly (2009) it should be pointed here that much of the work that addresses gender injustices (like VAW) is difficult to measure (or to fit in to RBM tools) because of the nature of these injustices:

They are patterned, but often happen as the aggregate result of individual interactions, each of which may seem insignificant; they are forms of injustice that are linked to others such as poverty and environment; and they often take place 'back-stage' out of public view. (Ackerly, 2009: 6)

Further, the various types of gender injustices, and the interaction between them can be very context specific and in continual change. In addition, monitoring frameworks such as RBM are reported to be 'inappropriate for multi-layered, complex organisations, transnational and regional networks, coalitions, membership-based organisations, and re-grating organisations such as women's funds' (Batliwala and Pitman, 2010). When working

in these types of collectivities, and when reporting back to funders, one of the organisations has to collate and summarise information coming from multiple levels and actors and make it fit into the established framework to make it appear as part of a single change or intervention. For the organisation receiving the funding, this also means that it needs to spell out its own contribution to the process 'using tools that are simply not designed to handle this level of complexity' (Batliwala and Pitman, 2010: 11). A further challenge for these types of collective work arrangements is tied to the use of participatory processes for planning, monitoring and evaluation embedded in RBM. While participative processes are highly valued and desirable in development work, how such multiple processes conducted by each individual member organisation of a collective are captured and condensed in final reporting to the funding agency is a highly complex and challenging task (Batliwala and Pitman, 2010).

But while the RBM approach poses significant challenges for women's organisations who work with 'difficult to measure issues' such as VAW and in coalitions, Horizons spoke about having benefited from RBM. This, I consider a surprising finding. RBM has served to clarify and focus the work of Horizons *at the institutional level*. As such, Horizons have ensured that their partners are trained in how to use these tools in their own approach to management. This surprising finding initially made me question whether Horizons has been co-opted into the increasing technocracy of gender equality measurement. A close look at their annual report revealed how Horizons has incorporated the language of aid effectiveness in their accountability to DFATD and speaks of 'supporting partners on their own aid effectiveness' in the context of their 'Strengthening Civil Society programme'. Admittedly, I found this language confusing and disorienting. Further questioning, however, revealed not co-option but a subtle form of agency exercised by Horizons and AMICA. This will be expanded upon in the next section on agency and possibilities.

CAWN, on the other hand, reports a different experience showing that the use of RBM frameworks can have different effects on feminist organisations who seek a politically transformative agenda in their own (donor) country. CAWN highlighted that such frameworks and related tools are incompatible with their advocacy work which they see as a necessary strategy for changing gender blind policies originating in the UK. According to CAWN, under the new approach to aid it is hard to align advocacy work with effectiveness as it is difficult to say whether advocacy is going to result in a change of legislation or



influence policy. In fact, CAWN asserted that now there is little or no support for advocacy from the part of the UK government. So here, the new aid effectiveness approach weakens the possibility of a transformative approach to gender equality work.

On the second point regarding how aid money is being increasingly used to further entrench neoliberal, gender blind mindset and market led activities; new trends on the use of aid money from both the Canadian and UK governments are worth highlighting here. Evidence from newspaper reports point to large investments being made by the British aid programme in gated communities, luxury properties and shopping centres (The Guardian, 4 May 2014; New Internationalist, 7 May 2014). This move is part of a global trend, particularly in conservative governments, to align foreign aid with commercial economic interests (Sharma, 2014). In the Canadian case, aid money is being used, for example, to fund the operations of the new International Research Institute for Extractive Industries and Development (in partnership with the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University in Canada). The institute comes as part of Canada's corporate social responsibility approach and is supposed to 'deliver knowledge on proven regulation and oversight to help resource-rich developing countries create jobs and economic growth' as well as 'help developing countries reap the benefits of their natural resources, and also benefit Canadian companies in fair, transparent, and foreseeable regulation in the extractive sector' (DFTAD press release, 23 November 2012). Again here, and using Griffin's words, 'gender becomes noticeable through its absence' (Griffin, 2007: 723). NGOs in Canada are reported to be sceptical of the real motive behind the policy supporting the extractives industries to promote economic development in the global South. The director of international programmes of Oxfam is quoted saying: 'It may well be positive, but it's certainly not a policy that is driven by concern about poverty reduction' (Sharma, 2014).

The emphasis on quickly demonstrable, quantifiable, short term, easy to measure initiatives in the context of the above mentioned 'difficult framework conditions' demonstrate at least three main shortcomings of the new aid effectiveness approach: 1) how unsuitable RBM are for gender-based approaches to gender equality work, 2) that RBM falls short to capture complex, non-linear, hard to measure, long term issues of gender inequality that are often inextricably interlinked, and 3) that the emphasis on technocratic and management approaches that ignore country and local politics can have harmful

192

consequences to women and women's organisations, and their ability to pursue a transformative gender equality agenda of action.

### 5.2.2. Second Limitation

#### *Ownership and GAD: Women's Participation in the Development Process*

As the first principle of the Paris Declaration, 'ownership' plays a central role in a country's national development plans. The expectation is that a participative process involving civil society will shape the national development plans – often the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS). At the global level, gender equality advocates engaging with the aid effectiveness agenda have advocated for women's groups and voices to be part of the process in true 'gender and development approach'. But the expectation that Nicaragua is going to launch itself into a series of consultations with its citizens to this end ignores the significance of that country's recent history during the era of structural adjustment programmes and PRSs, and the even more recent 'witch hunt' of feminists and women's organisations by the government. As a result of this history, foreign funded civil society organisations have been deemed 'subversive' and even labelled by the Presidential couple as 'vile' (using a play of words in Spanish: *sociedad civil* (civil society) to '*sociedad sí vil*'). This is partly linked to their ideological stance in favour of Reproductive Health and Rights which include support for safe abortion. It would be naive to assume that the existing Citizen Power Councils – the main mechanism of government to promote citizen participation and implementation of important government pro-poor programmes– can be the actual sites of citizens' engagement with the development process. Evidence from the academic literature and newspapers shows these Citizen Power Councils (CPC) are seen with great scepticism if not outright hostility by many in civil society. This perception is due to deeply rooted political animosities surrounding these CPCs who are accused of clientelism, corruption and of serving the (increasingly authoritarian) interests of President Ortega – much like the old 'Sandinista Defence Committees' (Cannon and Kirby, 2012; Schulz, 2007; Habel López, 2007). Thus, the CPCs have not and cannot be expected to promote the demands of CSOs, feminist and women's organisations in particular, whose conflicting relationship with the government, and with the CPCs themselves, continue to this day.<sup>56</sup> This political scenario

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<sup>56</sup> Back in 2007 over 20 CSOs petitioned the Opposition to revoke the CPCs (EFE, 2007).



also poses a challenge to Gender and Development theory, which promotes the participation of both men and women in decision-making. Such polarised political context raises questions on what constitutes 'participation', what are the sites / mechanisms where it can be translated into concrete actions for a transformative approach to gender equality, whose participation counts, under what conditions, and at what price. All of this inevitably complicates matters. Evidence from the cases provides important insights into these questions. These will be discussed in the next section on 'Possibilities through women's agency'.

The case of the MDG-Fund provides a unique picture. The promotion of women's participation in gender budgets was the stated goal of this joint programme between the Nicaraguan government (institutions and municipalities) and UN agencies. The collaborative fashion of the joint programme and the involvement of the UN agencies as 'third party' provide a unique set of platforms for women. Contrary to the previous cases where organisations heavily rely on foreign government funding – channelled through the Nicaraguan government – and are often excluded from national government funding and initiatives, this joint programme had been allocated with the necessary resources to be implemented jointly and had the 'buy in' of the various government ministries and municipalities. Working with a combination of local and state-wide government actors, led by the INIM (the main Nicaraguan agency for women) and the UNFPA, expanded the reach of the joint programme in terms of participants and beneficiaries. While the process of selection of municipalities to participate in this joint programme remains unclear in the documentation reviewed, the open nature of the programme and the mechanisms for participation devised allowed for people's involvement through the Citizens Power Councils and the municipalities. In light of the previous discussion regarding claims of CPC's record of clientelism, it is logical to assume that the beneficiaries of this joint programme were friendly to the Sandinista party although this cannot be verified. The Joint programme focused on working with people from the CPCs, and the staff at the various participating government ministries. However, despite the 'women's participation in gender budgets' aim of the programme, there is no mention in the reports about the involvement of feminist or women's civil society organisations of any sort. Again, context comes into play here to reveal the political parameters within which gender equality work takes place in Nicaragua. It should be further noted that the INIM now operates under the Ministry of the

Family, Youth and Children, which governs the National Program on Gender Equality since 2007 and whose mission is to safeguard the family institution 'from a rights and values perspective, using gender practices [...] with the direct participation of the population in the recuperation of human dignity' (Ministry of the Family, Youth and Children's website, accessed June 30, 2014). The family unit, and thus women in their roles as mothers, spouses and family members, are at the centre of the gender equality programme (as opposed to a focus on women as individuals in their own right). The Ministry's website further specifies that it boasts the participation of the Citizenship Power Councils. Seen from this perspective, one cannot ignore the extent to which political ideology and religion insert themselves into every aspect of gender equality initiatives, including seemingly progressive aid funded programmes such as the MDG-Fund one.

### 5.2.3. Third Limitation

*PD indicators act as tools of neo-colonialism, and are incongruent with gender equality and women's human rights*

Rooted in World Bank's criteria, the scoring system used to rate Nicaragua's progress is infused with neoliberal assumptions and with the particular gender-blind theories of classical economics already discussed in the first chapter. The Paris Declaration principles of Alignment and Harmonisation are the most central vehicles through which Nicaragua implements its commitments on aid effectiveness (OECD, 2008: 39-3). As such, Nicaragua devised a National Action Plan in Alignment and Harmonisation that, according to the 2008 Monitoring Survey of the OECD was yet to be implemented. A mapping study conducted by UNIFEM identifies that while the existence of such plan signals commitment to honour the commitments made under the Paris Declaration, evaluation reports of 2008 demonstrated that gender had not been prioritized by the Nicaraguan government and as such, the benefits of development cooperation had not been visible for women (EC/UN Partnership, 2008a: 10). A closer look to some of the indicators under the said principles of Alignment and Harmonisation provides specific glimpses into the strong governance effect that the indicators under these principles exercise.<sup>57</sup> That is, a liberalised policy

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<sup>57</sup> Governance effect refers to the influence indicators have on political decisions, the allocation of resources and the assessment of how countries are performing (Merry, 2011: S85).



environment is being deliberately shaped through these indicators. Indicators (targets) 5a and 5b of the Paris Declaration are an instance of this occurrence. Following the commitments to 'use country procurement systems' and the 'use of country public financial management systems' in partner countries, the Nicaraguan government undertook to reform its own procurement system to satisfy the requirement to 'adhere to internationally accepted good practices' or 'have a reform programme in place to achieve these'. In reality, these practices entail the deregulation of public procurement (Navarro, 2012). As a result of deregulating its public procurement, most development cooperation funds received by Nicaragua are now subject to international bidding procedures which, according to a recent Eurodad report: 'disadvantage and are not accessible to domestic companies, favour foreign companies and severely limit the possibilities for government to use public procurement as a tool to stimulate economic and social development policy according to Nicaragua's national priorities' (Acevedo Vogl, 2013: 3). Considering that public procurement in Nicaragua has been compared in size as akin to the country's manufacturing industry (it averaged 13.5% of GDP between 2001-2009) the liberalisation of this sector in the current shape constitutes a significant obstruction of Nicaragua's right to development (Acevedo Vogl, 2011:3). Further, evidence published by the journal of the Nicaraguan Institute of Strategic Studies and Public Policy (IEEPP<sup>58</sup>) demonstrates that the processes of internationalisation of public procurement are not fully understood by Nicaraguan businesses so they are unable to fully participate in the bidding processes (Navarro, 2012; Acevedo Vogl, 2011). No evidence of intention to carry out gender analysis of such liberalisation process for procurement was found. It can thus be concluded, based on the studies produced by feminist economists cited in chapter one (Seguino, 2012; Braunstein, 2008; Seguino and Grown, 2006; Ege, 2011; Berik and van der Meulen Rodgers, 2008; Ferber and Nelson, 2003, etc) that the neoliberal economic logic at play here is set to exacerbate gender inequalities as a result of the liberalisation of this sector.

Other important indicators/ targets under Alignment worth noting for their strong governance effect in shaping of gender blind liberalisation policies are indicators 2a and 2b (Reliable Country Systems). They are both instances of World Bank measurement tools being inserted in the Paris Declaration indicators. The measure in question is the Country

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<sup>58</sup> Acronym in Spanish is IEEPP which stands for 'Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas'.

Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) scale of performance. The CPIA 'assesses the quality of a country's present policy and institutional framework. Quality refers to how conducive that framework is to fostering poverty reduction, sustainable growth, and the effective use of development assistance' (World Bank, 2011: 1). The CPIA is the primary determinant of World Bank aid allocations although it is also used for several corporate activities (World Bank, 2011). There are 16 criteria under this ranking, which are usually organised in four clusters: 1) Economic Management, 2) Structural Policies, 3) Policies for Inclusion/ Equity, 4) Public Sector Management and Institutions. Still reflecting parts of the Washington Consensus, the CPIA's fourth cluster related to governance was recently added (in 2007) and is the one which carries most weight in the allocation criteria to rate a country's performance (Country Performance Rating – CPR). Gender equality, environmental sustainability, health, and education 'are only of marginal importance in the allocation process and issues of infrastructure, human rights or democracy are not covered explicitly' (Streets, 2008). Under the Paris Declaration, countries are expected to move at least one measure on the CPIA scale of performance, and one measure up on the four point scale used to assess performance for this indicator (indicators 2a and 2b).

Thus, the approach to aid effectiveness made visible by Nicaragua's ranking in the Paris Declaration indicators reveal that it is progressively gearing its country systems towards the management of aid money in favour of a liberalised / deregulated policy environment according to the neoliberal economic recipe, despite Ortega's anti-neoliberal rhetoric. This disparity between anti neoliberal rhetoric and neoliberal reality does not contradict critics of Ortega who have accused the government of following a neoliberal agenda 'owing to the business interests of Ortega and his continued cooperation with international financial institutions, including capital' (Cannon and Hume, 2012: 59). This move towards liberalisation, as it has been restated in previous chapters, is also incongruent with gender equality and women's human rights and, indeed, with Nicaragua's own National Human Development Plan.



### 5.3. From the global (governance) to the local (gender-sensitive development): an ongoing tension

Throughout the course of this thesis, a tension between the need for global gender-sensitive indicators to measure aid effectiveness and for context specificity has become clear to me. At the beginning stages of this research, I began from the assumption that the gender blind Paris Declaration, faulty as it is, needed to be engendered if a more holistic, gender-sensitive view of aid effectiveness was going to be possible. As a global agenda, equally global gender-sensitive indicators made sense to me especially at a time of widespread recognition of the importance of gender in development strategies. At this point of the research journey I wish to take issue with the hypothesis as I look back to Sen's work, to recent developments in gender and development theory, to feminist epistemologies and feminist political economy, and the research findings, all of which have informed my thinking.

Sen's point on the importance of indicators to value human capabilities, and for these to be specific to locality and values, stresses the above mentioned tension between the need for local specificity and the need to set a progressive direction through indicators at the global level. I find it virtually impossible to conceptualise global gender-sensitive indicators that can be applicable to the multi-faceted nature of aid, and the range of contexts within which it is at work, let alone the diversity of peoples and their values. This was reinforced by the evidence from the interviews where the organisations reported they never use the GII to measure the effectiveness of their projects (or any part of their work) as this index 'does not speak to their work'.

As of the Gender and Development approach, the inclusion of gender as a category in global indicators of aid effectiveness would also fall short in many fronts. The work of Mohanty (1995) long warned against the universalising thrust of gender as a category which neglects the role of class and race in women's oppression (and other identities). She highlighted that:

Feminist analyses which attempt to cross, national, racial and ethnic boundaries produce and reproduce difference in particular ways. This codification of difference occurs through the naturalisation of analytic categories which are supposed to have cross-cultural validity. (Mohanty, 1995: 69)

Looking at potential gender-sensitive measures in this light, and to the GII in particular, the GII is seen to construct a particular kind of 'universalised woman'. This universal woman is 'indexed' because she is a mother, educated minimally at secondary school level, she is possibly a Member of Parliament and part of the *paid* workforce. In most cases and in the case of Nicaragua particularly, this artificial persona does not represent those who opt not to be or who cannot be mothers, those who are left out of the school system (and the reasons for being so), those who work in the unpaid subsistence and care economies (and the reasons for them not to count), and assume that Parliament is the highest forum for women to be politically powerful. An illustration regarding this last point is pertinent here. With a staggering 40.2% of women in Parliament, Nicaragua has one of the highest rates of female Parliamentary participation globally (IPU, 2011). Yet this number cannot reflect distinct women's leadership roles in other non individualistic leadership forms/positions of power – at the community and municipality levels, in ministries, or at regional levels to name just a few – meaningful to their particular contexts, values, and capabilities. Lastly, Nicaragua's relatively high GII score cannot reflect the nature of women's participation in such fora, and the extent to which they are in a position to advance a gender equality agenda in an ethnically diverse country. What a high GII does do in this context is to create an illusion of gender equality which serves the perception that Nicaragua's society is more gender equal than it actually is (with consequences to the prioritisation of resource allocations for gender equality). Lastly, as other global indices, the GII privileges the numerical ranking logic, where countries are understood to 'compete' in a linear hierarchy for a top spot thus depoliticising the conditions and dynamics affecting gender relations within societies.

By suggesting the GII to engender the indicators of the Paris Declaration or aid effectiveness broadly, and constructing this 'universal woman' we would be erasing race, class, religion and other important areas where multiple forms of discrimination intersect with one another. In Nicaragua, an intersectional approach is all the more relevant considering the multi-fold discriminations faced by many of the country's peoples (ethnic, gender, class, religious and ideological amongst others). An intersectional approach seeks to understand and address multiple discriminations while deepening understanding of how different sets of identities impact on access to rights and opportunities (AWID, 2004). The Miskito indigenous community of which AMICA is part (and other indigenous groups, including of



Afro-descendants) experience various forms of discrimination/ alienation from the mainstream development processes. As the findings showed, AMICA, is vulnerable to the swings of the 'calls for proposals' and the ability of Horizons to continue their support. Even when considered through the lens of the MDG-F project which used a gender-sensitive approach at all levels, these indigenous communities' interests and perspectives were not always fully visible (not least how their gendered experiences were incorporated in the programme). The final report of the Joint programme makes this explicit:

Los alcances del PCG en la Costa Caribe, fueron adecuaciones a las particularidades políticas y culturales, quedando pendiente profundizar en elementos antropológicos con implicaciones para la equidad de género de acuerdo a las cosmovisiones de las etnias.

[The reach of the JP [joint programme] in the Caribbean Coast pertained to political and cultural particularities. A deeper understanding of the anthropological elements with implications for gender equality in accordance to the world views of these ethnic groups remains pending.]

(Florez et al, 2012: 16)

Other aspects of the GII to be raised in terms of its applicability to measuring aid effectiveness is that this index captures long term broad changes in society and not short term changes related to judging the effectiveness of particular programmes or projects based on smaller and diverse localities. Under the aid effectiveness mindset promoted by the Paris Declaration, effectiveness is judged in a relatively short term basis, linked to various indicators and targets. This is contrary to how effectiveness is approached and defined by organisations working at the local level, who speak of long term processes and of the intersection of factors that are in constant state of flux over time.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, the GII's specific focus on the reproductive health of some women, on educational attainment of a particular kind, and on the extent of women's participation in the labour force, focus on short term areas of a women's life which makes this index unfit for capturing other areas where gender inequality is manifested, where it is also in a state of constant change, and where significant changes can only be visible in the long term. But even if the GII index was to be considered to measure the effectiveness of aid particular to the areas it measures, it

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<sup>59</sup> This particular will be discussed later in the text under section 3.

would be virtually impossible to attribute those changes to specific forms of aid. Mainly, this is due to the lack of mechanisms to track aid money to particular sectors (and corresponding gender disaggregated data), the divide between OECD aid and ALBA aid money coming into Nicaragua and the inconsistent availability of data on the use of foreign aid from the part of the Nicaraguan government generally.

#### **5.4. Possibilities through women's agency**

In the midst of the political alienation/ polarisation into which feminists are enmeshed in Nicaragua, and considering the pressures brought by the new aid agenda, one should ask: how do women manage to participate in the development process? What forms of agency are manifested in this difficult context? Here I refer to agency in its positive sense – the power to – defined by Kabeer (2005) as people's ability to make and act on their own life choices, even in the face of others' opposition.

Organisations, like AMICA and Maria Elena Cuadra (MEC), are able to conduct their work in service of women's human rights largely due to their foreign funding, and solidarity-based relationships with their own communities, like minded organisations, and beneficiaries who often remain involved with the organisations as volunteers. Both AMICA and MEC use participatory processes to inform their strategies and approach, and rely heavily on the voluntary work of local community actors. The latter, a valuable type of unremunerated work, and key to the organisations' ability to connect with their target groups, has ensured that the organisations continue to provide support to their beneficiaries. In the case of MEC, which has taken a significant loss of staff due to reduced funding, it relies heavily on a network of voluntary 'promotoras' whose responsibilities include the identification of issues of importance to MEC's membership, follow up with existing cases, and support members at the community level. The 'promotoras' often serve as direct links for dialogue between the community and local municipalities, and boast a high status (respect) with the authorities for their effective work. Similarly, AMICA uses volunteers to escort women in the various legal processes and relies on their work to support beneficiaries in the process of seeking justice on the cases of violence against women they serve. As such these cases illustrate women's agency in the context of the very restrictive political and funding environment of Nicaragua. Because of the tight links with their communities, their local



knowledges about effective strategies to mobilise and continuing to support women, as well as the solidarity aspect of their work, especially that of their volunteers, both MEC and AMICA are able to carry on with their operations. They do so despite the lack of sufficient support from their own government and the imminent discontinuation of foreign government funding that is, ironically, partly a consequence of the new aid effectiveness agenda. At the policy level, MEC has been successful in forging alliances with other organisations to advocate for changes in legislation on violence against women. Law 779 on VAW was highly influenced by MECs efforts.<sup>60</sup> The effectiveness of aid here is invisible in Paris Declaration indicators as is the fact of the economic vulnerability faced by these organisations and their beneficiaries. Also invisible here (to the wider world through indicators) is the significance of women's particular ways of knowing shaping their own political engagement amidst these difficult funding and political circumstances. Their strategies are based on their 'situated knowledges' that Haraway (1988) famously theorised upon and I referred to in chapter three. It is through their situated knowledges that AMICA's volunteers come to know the importance of escorting women in the judiciary processes in the context of a reality where men are likely to take measures against those who denounce their crimes. It is through that same situated knowledge that AMICA's staff comes to know the importance of working with the local men and community judges in their understanding of gender equality issues. In the case of the judges, it is them who have the power to refer cases to the higher authorities at the state level (to which women would not have easy access by themselves).

#### **5.4.1. Engendering effectiveness: lessons from the case studies**

Through the three case examples women can be seen reconceptualising the dominant discourse on effectiveness in three areas identified by McIlwaine and Datta (2003) as recent transformations within gender and development theory. The first is recognition of the diversity among women. This recognition was largely brought to GAD by feminists from the 'global South' (and with it the need for an intersectional approach as highlighted in the above discussion on the GII). The work of Horizons through AMICA and the MDG-Fund Joint programme are examples of engagement with indigenous women and Afro-descendants in

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<sup>60</sup> Further details can be found in Solís (2013) including a historical account of Law 779.

addition to working with 'majority group' women in Nicaragua. Horizons in particular took specific steps as an organisation to identify and target these groups in the Caribbean Coast. AMICA and Horizons have a relatively recent history of collaboration and they both speak highly of each other's work and the level of support received (AMICA). But this relatively new move towards working with indigenous and Afro-descendants peoples means there is plenty to be learned about what are culturally appropriate interventions, and about the ways to support the strategic and practical needs of indigenous and Afro-descendants peoples. Horizons recognises the limits of their engagement as an organisation as some of the communities are located in extremely remote and hard to reach areas, which does not allow for consistent presence there. In the case of the MDG-Fund, the reports speak of the limits of the Joint programme to fully understand and address the needs of these groups. The Joint programme recognises that specific cosmologies/ paradigms and cultural attributes of the indigenous and Afro-descendants communities need to be better understood and points at this as an area where more resources and efforts are needed.

The second area attesting to the recent shifts and transformations within GAD theory, and present in the local organisations' approach to aid effectiveness illustrated here is the explicit integration of men and masculinities in the two projects and the MDG Fund joint programme. The integration of men and masculinities in these programmes is meant to address the culture of 'machismo' that permeates in Nicaragua (and most of Latin America) in recognition that women cannot change the aggressive behaviours of men. Working with men on masculinities usually involves facilitating dialogue and reflection on areas exposed in a literature review carried by Muñoz Cabrera (2010), including the cultural mechanisms that instil men to believe in their supremacy over women and in their right to abuse them (whether psychologically, physically or sexually) not least the belief that this is a 'naturally male behaviour' (Muñoz Cabrera, 2011).

In the case of Horizons and its work supporting local organisations on the issue of violence against women (VAW), it reported an increase of local partners' interest to work with men more at a deeper level:

More and more partners are wanting to work with men around concepts of masculinity, around violence. They're getting to the point where they feel comfortable to do that and they see that as the next stage [...] They see that it's not



just saying: 'This is what violence against women is,' is 'let's talk about it in a different way.' (Interview with Horizons, 6 Nov 2013)

Underpinning this strategy is an understanding that for change to take place the chauvinistic attitudes that have dominated society for so long need to be addressed in *collaboration with* men. In Nicaragua, work on masculinities as a strategy is particularly timely in the context of the controversial LAW 779 on VAW referred to above, which can impose a maximum penalty of 30 years of prison to offenders and prohibits mediation for sentences beyond 5 years of prison. This law has been met with great resistance from the Catholic Church, whose Bishop has dubbed it 'the anti-Christ law' for it 'destroys families and marriages by not allowing mediation' in sentences of 5 or more years (Bishop Mata quoted in REDMAS, 2013). Considering the moral pressure there is on women to opt for the allegedly 'voluntary' mediation processes and that 30% of the cases of women who participated in such processes in 2012 ended up in homicides (Solís, 2013), working with males on VAW is a critical matter. AMICA is well aware of this alarming rate and has a VAW education strategy focused on working with men as a way to subvert the possibility of retaliation against the women who seek AMICA's services (interview with AMICA, 14 Nov 2013). AMICA also works with male community judges on their understanding of VAW to assist in their understanding of gender dimensions of VAW and, thus, on their decisions to refer cases to the locally based state justice authorities. Further, AMICA reported that following the training provided by the organisation, the communal judges who participate attend directly to cases of VAW by ensuring that due processes are followed for victims seeking justice. Working with men has proven so popular and successful that, as the MDG-Fund Joint programme case demonstrates, a network of national scale called 'Men Allied with Women's Health' has been created (involving the 15 participant municipalities) and which has served as example to other countries in the region. Further, this joint programme provided capacity building activities on the theme of masculinities targeting the personnel of the Ministry of Health.

The third area into which women can be seen to be transforming the GAD discourse through aid effectiveness is the shift from a needs based to a rights based approach to development (McIlwaine and Datta 2003). All three cases are centred on rights: indigenous rights (Horizons/ AMICA), civil and economic rights (CAWN/ MEC) and a range of civil,

economic, sexual health and reproductive rights (MDG-Fund). Interestingly, in all three cases, women are seen to reclaim their rights by appropriating the language of effectiveness on feminist lines in resistance to the technocratic approach. For instance, the MDG-Fund Joint programme distinguishes between efficiency and effectiveness, the latter meaning 'the extent to which development objectives have been / are hoped to be met taking into account their relative importance'. The emphasis here is on development objectives specific to the gender focus of the programme as opposed to the related but distinct efficiency approach which refers to resources and funds being turned into results. Contrary to the predominant short-term technocratic approach by the Paris Declaration, the interviewees emphasised that effectiveness in gender equality is about achieving development results and that this is a long term process. In the case of Horizons, who uses the term 'efficiency', 'effectiveness', and 'results' interchangeably, they consider effectiveness to be taking place when positive results can be seen in three interlinked areas (service to the community, knowledge production, and citizen engagement) pointing at a more elaborate and complex interpretation of what is involved in obtaining an 'effective' result.

This more complex understanding of what constitute effective results directly speaks to an interpretation of issues of gender equality as multi-layered requiring a multi-faceted approach. For CAWN, 'effectiveness is about transformation, about empowering women' (interview with CAWN, 17 February 2014). The transformation and empowerment of women that CAWN spoke of entails many small and big steps with short and long term strategies. It is not a linear progressive process and requires steady support to deal with the usual setbacks typical of any process of change.

Results-based management tools make it virtually impossible to account for these non-linear changes nor do they allow for non-linear ways of knowing to be used in reporting results. Such transformation and empowerment is often a collective experience but rooted in individual (equally empowering) experiences that lead to relationships of solidarity. This type of solidarity comes closest to a form of power that Tickner (2014) and other feminist scholars writing about power refer to as 'relationships of mutual enablement' (Tickner, 2014: 12). In my view, it is such type of empowerment that effective aid, should seek to support *as well as* individual empowerment. This collective form of power/ mutual



enablement is visible also in the strategies used by feminists across the globe who have developed relationships of solidarity that support the visibility of feminists' of the global South, and which sometimes facilitates access to decision makers in donor countries and fund raising. Such is the case of CAWN that, despite its own vulnerability and the fact that DFID phased Nicaragua out of its priority list, has continued to organise speaker tours to make their Nicaraguan counterparts visible to other feminists, members of the public and potential collaborators in the UK and Europe.

The above examples of women's insistence to appropriate the language of effectiveness form part of the type of alternative discourses that Latin American feminists encourage us to chart in order to reveal the real asymmetry of positions over the rhetoric of equality and universality and, in this case, of aid effectiveness and women's empowerment, not in order to completely reject such rhetoric but to effectively demand it in women's own terms.

Nuestros discursos alternativos favorecen la ruptura político-epistemológica de los contextos naturalizados y abren espacios de comprensión y de re significación. Al hacerlo, generan espacios diversos para pensar, explicar y dar voz propia a las múltiples fuerzas étnicas, sexuales, económicas, culturales que se precipitan en el lugar de lo nuevo. (Femenías, 2007: 15)

Our alternative discourses favour the political and epistemological rupture of the naturalised contexts, and open spaces of understanding and redefinition. By doing so, our discourses generate diverse spaces to think, to explain and give own voice to the multiple ethnic, sexual, economic and cultural forces that advance to the place of the new. (Femenías, 2007: 15)

Speaking about the kind of epistemological rupture that Femenías promotes in the quote above, I follow various Latin American feminists who also argue for such rupture. That is, they urge a break from the assumptions and epistemologies based on Western notions of universalism which were brought by colonialism and that structure modern Latin American states (Femenías, 2007 and 2009; Mendoza, 2010; Bidaseca and Vazquez Laba, 2011). They remind us of the specific colonial context and pluralistic identities shaping the experiences of Latin American peoples. Speaking from the perspective of the Social Sciences, Walsh (2007) recalls that it was through the colonial enterprise that Western scientific knowledge became central. Western scientific knowledge (with its universalising thrust and positivist lens) was imposed at the expense of local, situated, relational knowledges. In so doing a

social division and hierarchy that discriminated against people by sex-gender, ethnicity and class was created (Walsh, 2007, Femenías, 2007, Mendoza, 2010). These divisions and discriminations influenced and shaped ideas about the inferiority of indigenous and black men and women alike. Their experiences and knowledges, largely emerging from relational practices of being with/ from nature, were classified as unscientific, traditional and thus backward. Their knowledges were never considered scientific or even accorded the status of 'knowledge' per se (Walsh, 2007). So, in order to counter this colonial legacy and what is often referred to as the resulting 'epistemic racism' (Díaz, 2011) it is necessary to engage situated knowledges through processes that value the participation of those benefiting from aid, and black and indigenous women and men in particular. Accounting for situated knowledges allows for practices and indicators of aid effectiveness to be informed by the particular peoples receiving aid, in all their diversity, according to their particular contexts (economic, religious, cultural, etc) and locations. This further allows the collection of place and context specific data, sensitive to gender and to multiple identities in order to shape indicator development. In turn, this emphasis on locally produced gender-sensitive data and indicators directly deals with the obstacle of 'lack of data' to produce more relevant indicators, which is often cited as a reason for producing incomplete / universalising type indicators. The practice would allow for the kind of 'strong objectivity' that Harding (1991) speaks of, which recognises that multiple perspectives, problems and methods are context specific and value laden (Runyan and Peterson, 2014: 69). Locally produced gender-sensitive indicators of aid effectiveness can emphasize and allow people's agency to shape their own conceptions of what effective interventions should be supported by foreign aid. This is not to say, however, that we should 'fetishize the local' as a pure an innocent space (Peterson and Runyan, 2014: 244). The Nicaraguan example clearly shows that local spaces are fraught with power struggles that perpetuate the favouring of some to the detriment of others. Any attempt to develop gender-sensitive indicators of aid effectiveness should take into consideration such realities and avoid reproducing or exacerbating existing negative power dynamics and discriminations.

These case examples illustrate the need for further exploration of the new epistemologies emerging from the neoliberal aid effectiveness paradigm. They also illustrate the paradox of the aid effectiveness agenda within which the women's rights organisations studied here are situated. On one hand, making aid more effective has presented setbacks and posed



serious challenges for both the measurement and continuation of gender equality work – something of which women have little control of. On the other hand, it is women’s agency which has enriched conceptualisations of effectiveness by their use of new strategies including, but not limited to gender- responsive budgeting, to demand such effectiveness in their own terms (amidst the difficult political framework conditions discussed above). However, feminist organisations in Nicaragua are still vulnerable financially as gendered neoliberal aid reduces the meaning of gender equality to instrumental, linear approaches to implementing and measuring effectiveness.

## Conclusion

This dissertation began only two years after the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness came into force. Since then, the political process has moved on rather swiftly and the academic literature on the subject has also grown significantly. During the course of the research, in the past two years to be exact, the aid effectiveness paradigm is reported to have shifted towards a new development effectiveness paradigm. This can be attributed largely to the contestation process that began in the First High Level Forum in Accra (2008) but that took firm shape after the last High Level Forum in Busan. There, it was recognised that institutional aid was only one element of the development process and that what is needed is effective development. While the post- Busan future seemed very uncertain at the time, as described in chapter two, a new Global Partnership for Effective Development was subsequently launched and with it a taskforce (sub-group) whose remit it was to produce a comprehensive set of indicators that could better reflect the new agenda. The first High Level Forum on Effective Development just took place last April 2014 in Mexico. Undoubtedly, and judging by the diverse content and the more democratic approach to the creation of the new indicators, the aid effectiveness process had an impact in the new agenda. In other words, the new Partnership for Effective Development has followed more inclusive process and has not ignored the importance of accounting for gender in development effectiveness. A stand-alone indicator on gender equality and women's empowerment is one in the new menu amongst 10 other indicators. This indicator is considered to be the newest in the continuum of gender-sensitive indicators that were proposed variously since the work of AGDEN, the EC/ UN Partnership and GENDERNET, described in chapter three, began (interview with OECD staff, February 26 2014). While the merits and drawbacks of the new development effectiveness agenda and its indicators are beyond the scope of this thesis, the presence of a gender indicator and a more democratic process can be highlighted as generally positive.

My analysis has been concerned with the issue of gender blindness in the aid effectiveness agenda with respect to its indicators. It considered and took issue with the approach to effectiveness established by the Paris Declaration of 2005 with the intention of suggesting ways to provide a gender dimension to the conceptualisation and measurement of aid



effectiveness. For this, the thesis took a step back from the aid agenda itself to first interrogate the origins and assumptions of the mainstream neoliberal economic paradigm that underpins it. The research revealed that there seems to be no particular core scientific theory underpinning neoliberal thinking or philosophical tradition as such, but that it is a political construct rooted in the core ideas and assumptions of classical economics emerging from the Chicago school in the post-war era. Therefore, I set out to uncover what philosophical and conceptual assumptions underpin classical economics. Using the work of feminist economists I found a series of gender biases in that field based on incomplete interpretations of human nature and behaviours. It was demonstrated that the male bias present in classical economics influenced and shaped the rationale and justification for development aid. This bias also underpins approaches and decisions about who needs what degree of aid and what aid effectiveness looks like. In terms of indicators, evidence from the investigation recalled the long-standing issue with GDP which continues to play a major role in development and aid policy even though it was never intended to be a measure of development. Itself a gender blind index, GDP attributes positive values to activities that are detrimental to human development and the environment while attributing no value to the subsistence and care economies so central to many countries receiving foreign aid.

Evidence from the research also showed that the liberalisation policies at the centre of the mainstream neoliberal paradigm can provide temporary benefits or 'economic empowerment' to some women but that such policies promoted through aid often exacerbate existing gender inequalities, reproduce new forms of inequalities, and thus undermine the long term well-being of society as a whole. Lacking comprehensive gender analyses and gender mainstreaming approaches, many of the aid approaches to issues of poverty now in the mainstream seek market-based solutions (micro-credit, aid for trade, etc) to poverty which strengthen the existing economic paradigm leading to further gender discriminations. The research also found that the previous has been made possible via the legitimating and normalisation of certain language in authoritative international policy instruments, such as the Monterrey Consensus. The use of new seemingly progressive language that speaks of a 'holistic approach to inclusive and people-centred development' through 'partnerships', for 'sustainable development', 'human rights', 'gender equality', alongside 'market-led polices' in the global discourse of finance for development is

misrepresented as mutually reinforcing. It has the effect of acting as a smoke cloud that obscures the cycle of poverty and inequality embedded in this economic system.

Following the gender blind neoliberal model, the aid effectiveness agenda is thus seen to emerge as what feminist scholars have described 'an instance of global governance whereby ruling concerns are inserted into practices and understandings in countries that are the recipients of development aid through the use of mechanisms that purport to be technical and neutral but that are in fact political and interested' (Campbell and Teghtsoonian, 2010). The gender blindness, the absence of human rights language, and the neoliberal direction set out by the indicators of the Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness are a reflection of this reality.

In search for alternative ways to engender the approach to measuring aid effectiveness, the thesis went on to consider the three main proposals of gender-sensitive indicators that emerged from the process of contestation of the Paris Declaration by civil society and by gender equality advocates. My intention was to understand the composition and impact of the three proposals, the gender-sensitive indicators in particular, in order to identify their valuable aspects as well as the limits to gender equality measurement in the context of aid effectiveness. I consider the charting of these proposals to be a contribution to the academic literature on indicators of aid effectiveness. The investigation here found: 1) that attempts to engender the aid agenda remain highly politicized despite progressive rhetoric and commitments to gender equality, 2) that the quality and nature of these proposals is highly shaped by institutional politics and the situatedness of the feminist authors' in these institutions who succumb their feminist impulses in favour of 'doing gender', and 3) that the voluntary and optional nature of accounting for gender equality can perpetuate the notion that it is an add on, and not important enough to the effectiveness of aid. The proposals put forward by these advocates reflect the complex nature of trying to fit in gender equality measurement in an existing gender blind, and thus faulty framework that itself carries a lot of legitimacy but that reduces/ confines complex issues into simplistic, easy to measure approaches. However, due to the agency and strategic choices of these gender advocates, gender equality remains 'at the global tables' despite the drawbacks of their proposals and their belated inclusion in the menu of options to measure aid effectiveness. There are three main highlights to note in terms of the indicators from this



segment of the thesis: 1) CEDAW and the BPfA stand out as strong and progressive elements of gender-sensitive measurement in aid effectiveness as these instruments retain the complexity and long term, ongoing nature of gender equality work, 2) the presence of gender budgets and production of sex disaggregated data stand out as consistent, tangible strategies to account for gender equality in aid effectiveness, 3) the three gender responsive proposals studied in chapter 3 did help influence the language and direction of the new approach to development effectiveness embodied in the latest 'Global Partnership for Effective Development' that has now followed the aid effectiveness paradigm (Kaabunga and Etta, 2013; interview with GENDERNET, 2014).

Having considered the above mentioned proposals, the exercise additionally looked at other popular gender indices, and sought philosophical guidance in the human development paradigm. The expectation was that this paradigm, itself emerging out of concerns with the prevailing economic focus on development, would offer conceptual and theoretical insight into the construction of gender-sensitive indicators. While the thesis found that none of the existing gender-related indices was specific enough to measure gender equality in the context of aid effectiveness, and that using gender as a category is insufficient to capture the diversity of women's experiences, the paradigm itself pointed to important aspects to consider/ value in the creation of indicators: valuing human capabilities, the importance of being specific to locality and context, and of reflecting the values of the community.

Following this guidance, and in light of Nicaragua's rhetorical commitments to gender equality and to the implementation of a dual development track (simultaneously neoliberal and anti-neoliberal), the research interrogated more specifically how 'gender responsive aid effectiveness' was interpreted, implemented and measured through a case study. The case also aimed at identifying any salient good practices and elements of gender-sensitive approaches to measurement of aid effectiveness in Nicaragua. The case study, which used various 'lenses' to look at aid effectiveness in that country, found a much more complex political reality than what is usually visible if just considering a country's 'performance' through indicators. Nicaragua's progressive ranking on key Paris Declaration indicators pointed to an increasingly neoliberal policy environment being shaped in direct contradiction to that country's anti-neoliberal rhetoric on development and its

212

commitments to promoting gender equality. In fact, if considered in the historical context of unequal power relations between aid donors and countries receiving aid, some of the Paris Declaration indicators can be seen as the newest form of colonialism in disguise. This was exemplified by indicators that promote the adherence to broadly accepted good practices' and which involve reforming important government practices towards liberalisation. Similarly, when seen through the Gender Inequality Index, the numerical ranking of Nicaragua makes the country appear far more gender equal than it actually is when considering the narratives emerging in the newspapers, the reports produced by the various women's organisations, and the interviews conducted for this research. In the words of Dobell and Walsh (2014) 'the narrative trumped the numbers'.

The cases also revealed that local politics and historical context are far too important to bypass. What in GAD theory are considered 'influencing factors' in the development process, can foreground and animate the process so much as to actually shape what is possible in terms of aid allocations and gender policy. In other words, the dynamic and polarised nature of national, local and community politics, and the influence of ideology and religion in gender policy in Nicaragua cannot be underestimated for these can influence the version of gender equality implemented, whether 'feminine' or 'feminist', and who gets to benefit from aid money. For these reasons the widely prescribed participatory processes to development should be treated with caution. Attempts to impose such processes in Nicaragua can have the opposite effect (of exclusion) with detrimental consequences for civil society (including feminist) organisations, and, in the long term, for the intended beneficiaries of aid programmes.

At this point of the research, the tension between the need to engender the global aid agenda and the need to deal with context specific issues became very clear. With an ethnically diverse population facing intersecting discriminations, and distinct conceptualisations of what gender equality means – whether 'feminine' or 'feminist'— global measures that attempt to homogenise women and gender equality, including the use of gender as a category, are set to fall short from capturing the complex experiences and needs of Nicaraguan women, especially indigenous and Afro-descendants. On these



bases, the thesis hypothesis was disproved.<sup>61</sup> In other words, the Gender Inequality Index is not fit for capturing the types of changes that take place through specific development aid projects/ programmes. This index that privileges quantitative data measures 'the loss of potential achievement' due to gender inequality in the long term, within the broad areas of education, employment, and sexual health (UNDP, 2013). A global index like this is 'too macro' to be applicable as 'one size fits all' to local level, short term aid that tends to be small scale and short term. Similarly, global indices like the GII are not fit for tracking changes on the effective use of aid for national programmes either, such as the MDG-Fund which had specific objectives areas not covered by the GII. In the words of Liebowitz and Zwingel:

[Global gender indices] articulate a very narrow understanding of gender equality, they produce a logic of ranking rather than problem solving; they construct the South as deficient 'at the bottom'; they lump women together into a collective without differences; and they obscure processes of agencies in social change. (Liebowitz and Zwingel, 2014: 10)

On the positive side, evidence from the cases also revealed that women's agency can disrupt attempts to render gender equality a technical exercise in parts of Nicaragua. The cases point to women working in grassroots organisations as well as those (from the donor countries) working to support them actively refusing to subsume their efforts to short-term technical approaches to gender equality. *While they have learned to work within the new language of effectiveness they insist in appropriating such language, not in order to reject effectiveness, but to demand it in their own terms: a multi-dimensional, intersectional, context specific, long term, transformative approach based on human rights and involving both men and women. In this way, they enrich the term 'aid effectiveness' and the process rather than curtail it.* In various ways, these women differentiate the language of efficiency from that of effectiveness to make important distinctions that attend to the need of strengthening organisations as well as the needs of their beneficiaries in all their diversity. Similarly, women insist in appropriating the language of women's empowerment to mean not just short term economic empowerment but the transformation of gender relations

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<sup>61</sup> The thesis hypothesis stated: 'Gender-related indicators such as the Gender Inequality Index must be essential to measuring aid effectiveness because of their emphasis in capturing inequalities between men and women in key areas addressed by development goals.'

supported by relationships of solidarity, a form of enabling power that favours more equitable interactions based on mutual respect and not on domination.

The cases further revealed that the results-based management (RBM) framework and measuring tools typical of the new approach to managing aid can be helpful to some organisations but only in terms of strengthening their institutional operational base and not in terms of measuring gender equality outcomes. This 'strengthening' is relative to organisations being responsive to donor's demands. The linear 'cause-effect' emphasis of measuring results falls short of capturing complex, hard to measure, and often interlinked issues of gender inequality and leave little or no room for some of the transformative strategies (such as advocacy) to advance a gender justice agenda. Similarly, it should be further noted that the imposition of RBM leaves little or no room for the expression of 'other ways of knowing' based on non-linear understandings of how impact occurs, neither does it allow to adequately capture context, or the merits of maintaining past gains since results are defined as change (Batliwala and Pittman, 2010). These approaches highlight the inadequacy of the measuring tools, unable to grasp the complexity of the meaning of gender equality, and not the 'ineffectiveness' of the projects being funded (Ackerly, 2009; Liebowitz and Zwingel, 2014). Further, the combination of RBM frameworks and the new funding modalities, in some of the cases illustrated here, is associated with the weakening or outright demise of gender equality work conducted by feminist organisations in both donor and recipient countries.

However, the insistence by feminists on appropriating the language of effectiveness and their determination to carry on with their work in solidarity with like-minded organisations does not erase the fact of their financial vulnerability and the political pressures surrounding them. As Lydia Alpizar succinctly expressed in the foreword of a timely report on the status of financing for women's rights organising and gender equality:

The steady and essential processes of organizing women, raising their consciousness, helping them analyze the root causes of their disempowerment, building women's collective power and collective strategies for change, supporting women to challenge the cultural and social norms that justify their subordination – in other words, the core elements of a sustainable long-term struggle for transforming the institutions and structures that perpetuate both gender and other forms of discrimination and exclusion – are considered too slow and difficult to



measure, and receive little or no support, except from a handful of insightful and experienced donors. (Alpizar in Arutyunova and Clark, 2013: 10)

In response to the current challenges, feminists across borders have developed relationships of solidarity which, despite the failures of their own governments, contribute to efforts to advocate, educate, and sometimes even raise money for gender equality work to continue. For example, the work of transnational feminists has acquired new force. This mobilisation is not unique to feminists groups. Many indigenous collectives worldwide have also been forging alliances to deal with the lack of inclusion of their perspectives in policy making (not limited to aid) (Mendoza, 2010). Many have set to develop indicators and data to inform their own policy and decision-making and to lobby governments for the allocation of resources and policy change (Stankovitch, 2008; Pisquiy Pac, 2008). These collective forms of empowerment have the potential to better 'engender effectiveness' by expanding aid management's current focus on technocracy towards a multiple, situated, critical multicultural ethic based on human rights and the achievement of sustainable development goals.

The goal of contributing to the discussion of 'engendering effectiveness' by suggesting a framework of indicators that can provide a gender dimension to the aid agenda still haunts me. I did not set out to produce a body of work that would just present a critique or reject the aid effectiveness agenda entirely but rather I wanted to contribute by expanding this discussion with practical elements that can enhance practice. While it would be counterproductive to try prescribing yet another framework or list of recipes as a 'one size fits all' approach to engendering effectiveness, I would like to gesture at some areas that emerged from this research as important in the development of gender-sensitive indicators of aid / development effectiveness. The following list of considerations and questions to keep in mind does not follow a particular order.

- Importance of intersectional analyses to identify distinct experiences of discrimination and inequality lived by many in order to target aid / development efforts adequately

- Asking: to what extent have the beneficiaries and mediators of aid money been involved in the creation of indicators? What is the (power) history between them and how might differences be worked through?
- Importance of distinguishing between working 'in partnership' (when the power relations between parties are symmetrical) versus working 'collaboratively' (when the power asymmetries shape relationships)
- Asking: what are the experiences/ histories of the country or locality in question with participative processes? What lessons were learned and what culturally sensitive approaches can be developed to capitalise on the existing networks and structures to ensure a fruitful process of indicator development?
- Importance of using CEDAW and the Beijing Platform of Actions as tools to embed women's human rights into aid measures in order to keep holding governments to account in their legal commitments to respecting the human rights of women and ending gender based discriminations
- Asking: to what extent those involved in the management and facilitation of aid money, men and women, represent a variety of voices in their community?
- Asking if and how the process of indicator development allows/ hinders local women and men's ways of knowing and expressing to shape the planning and monitoring of aid initiatives.

My purpose in this thesis has been to situate the topic of gender-sensitive indicators of aid / development effectiveness in the feminist literature and further thinking on the viability of such indicators. The intention was to critique the gender blindness of the Paris Declaration, and argue for the need to reconceptualise the mainstream approach to aid effectiveness, including its measurement approaches. My aim here has been to advocate for specifically feminist epistemologies to inform the conceptualisation of aid / development effectiveness, and of gender-sensitive indicators in particular. While my argument is conceptually fitting with the human development paradigm and the capabilities approach specifically, my insistence on specifically feminist epistemologies is rooted in the historical neglect to engage with 'other ways of knowing' where women's interests and desires for transformative approaches to development are relegated to the margins even within seemingly well intentioned participatory processes. Mendoza (2010)



pointed to this concern in the context of the rise of new indigenous and transnational social movements with intellectual roots in Latin America (such as the World Social Forum). Noting the intermittent references to feminism within these movements and the emerging literature, she has questioned how far the new epistemologies of the South (as dos Santos Souza labels the new theories) go in their inclusion of feminist ideas and the issue of gender, in a way that the struggles and dreams of women are not buried as usual (Mendoza, 2010: 20). As pointed by feminist scholars and demonstrated by the Nicaraguan case, the realisation of gender equality and women's rights does not always follow a progressive path (Parisi, 2013).

The questions raised here are meant to enrich further thinking and approaches to aid and development effectiveness. I have done so by establishing my critique of the neoliberal aid paradigm and, through Feminist Political Economy and its sub disciplines, problematising the approach to implementing and measuring aid effectiveness enshrined in the Paris Declaration. By pointing at the effects of gender blindness in the global governance of aid through indicators of aid effectiveness I mean to highlight how blindness literally skews perceptions and decisions about *what* exactly remains to be done in terms of gender equality and poverty reduction, and importantly *how* it needs to be done.

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## Appendices

## Appendix 1: Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness



# PARIS DECLARATION ON AID EFFECTIVENESS

## Ownership, Harmonisation, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability

### I. Statement of Resolve

1. We, Ministers of developed and developing countries responsible for promoting development and Heads of multilateral and bilateral development institutions, meeting in Paris on 2 March 2005, resolve to take far-reaching and monitorable actions to reform the ways we deliver and manage aid as we look ahead to the UN five-year review of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) later this year. As in Monterrey, we recognise that while the volumes of aid and other development resources must increase to achieve these goals, aid effectiveness must increase significantly as well to support partner country efforts to strengthen governance and improve development performance. This will be all the more important if existing and new bilateral and multilateral initiatives lead to significant further increases in aid.

2. At this High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, we followed up on the Declaration adopted at the High-Level Forum on Harmonisation in Rome (February 2003) and the core principles put forward at the Marrakech Roundtable on Managing for Development Results (February 2004) because we believe they will increase the impact aid has in reducing poverty and inequality, increasing growth, building capacity and accelerating achievement of the MDGs.

#### Scale up for more effective aid

3. We reaffirm the commitments made at Rome to harmonise and align aid delivery. We are encouraged that many donors and partner countries are making aid effectiveness a high priority, and we reaffirm our commitment to accelerate progress in implementation, especially in the following areas:

- i. Strengthening partner countries' national development strategies and associated operational frameworks (e.g., planning, budget, and performance assessment frameworks).
- ii. Increasing alignment of aid with partner countries' priorities, systems and procedures and helping to strengthen their capacities.
- iii. Enhancing donors' and partner countries' respective accountability to their citizens and parliaments for their development policies, strategies and performance.
- iv. Eliminating duplication of efforts and rationalising donor activities to make them as cost-effective as possible.
- v. Reforming and simplifying donor policies and procedures to encourage collaborative behaviour and progressive alignment with partner countries' priorities, systems and procedures.
- vi. Defining measures and standards of performance and accountability of partner country systems in public financial management, procurement, fiduciary safeguards and environmental assessments, in line with broadly accepted good practices and their quick and widespread application.

4. We commit ourselves to taking concrete and effective action to address the remaining challenges, including:

- i. Weaknesses in partner countries' institutional capacities to develop and implement results-driven national development strategies.
- ii. Failure to provide more predictable and multi-year commitments on aid flows to committed partner countries.



- iii. Insufficient delegation of authority to donors' field staff, and inadequate attention to incentives for effective development partnerships between donors and partner countries.
  - iv. Insufficient integration of global programmes and initiatives into partner countries' broader development agendas, including in critical areas such as HIV/AIDS.
  - v. Corruption and lack of transparency, which erode public support, impede effective resource mobilisation and allocation and divert resources away from activities that are vital for poverty reduction and sustainable economic development. Where corruption exists, it inhibits donors from relying on partner country systems.
5. We acknowledge that enhancing the effectiveness of aid is feasible and necessary across all aid modalities. In determining the most effective modalities of aid delivery, we will be guided by development strategies and priorities established by partner countries. Individually and collectively, we will choose and design appropriate and complementary modalities so as to maximise their combined effectiveness.
6. In following up the Declaration, we will intensify our efforts to provide and use development assistance, including the increased flows as promised at Monterrey, in ways that rationalise the often excessive fragmentation of donor activities at the country and sector levels.

#### **Adapt and apply to differing country situations**

7. Enhancing the effectiveness of aid is also necessary in challenging and complex situations, such as the tsunami disaster that struck countries of the Indian Ocean rim on 26 December 2004. In such situations, worldwide humanitarian and development assistance must be harmonised within the growth and poverty reduction agendas of partner countries. In fragile states, as we support state-building and delivery of basic services, we will ensure that the principles of harmonisation, alignment and managing for results are adapted to environments of weak governance and capacity. Overall, we will give increased attention to such complex situations as we work toward greater aid effectiveness.

#### **Specify indicators, timetable and targets**

8. We accept that the reforms suggested in this Declaration will require continued high-level political support, peer pressure and coordinated actions at the global, regional and country levels. We commit to accelerate the pace of change by implementing, in a spirit of mutual accountability, the Partnership Commitments presented in Section II and to measure progress against 12 specific indicators that we have agreed today and that are set out in Section III of this Declaration.

9. As a further spur to progress, we will set targets for the year 2010. These targets, which will involve action by both donors and partner countries, are designed to track and encourage progress at the global level among the countries and agencies that have agreed to this Declaration. They are not intended to prejudice or substitute for any targets that individual partner countries may wish to set. We have agreed today to set five preliminary targets against indicators as shown in Section III. We agree to review these preliminary targets and to adopt targets against the remaining indicators as shown in Section III before the UNGA Summit in September 2005; and we ask the partnership of donors and partner countries hosted by the DAC to prepare for this urgently<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile, we welcome initiatives by partner countries and donors to establish their own targets for improved aid effectiveness within the framework of the agreed Partnership Commitments and Indicators of Progress. For example, a number of partner countries have presented action plans, and a large number of donors

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with paragraph 9 of the Declaration, the partnership of donors and partner countries hosted by the DAC (Working Party on Aid Effectiveness) comprising OECD/DAC members, partner countries and multilateral institutions, met twice, on 30-31 May 2005 and on 7-8 July 2005 to adopt, and review where appropriate, the targets for the twelve Indicators of Progress. At these meetings an agreement was reached on the targets presented under Section III of the present Declaration. This agreement is subject to reservations by one donor on (a) the methodology for assessing the quality of locally-managed procurement systems (relating to targets 2b and 5b) and (b) the acceptable quality of public financial management reform programmes (relating to target 5a.ii). Further discussions are underway to address these issues. The targets, including the reservation, have been notified to the Chairs of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the 59th General Assembly of the United Nations in a letter of 9 September 2005 by Mr. Richard Manning, Chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

have announced important new commitments. We invite all participants who wish to provide information on such initiatives to submit it by 4 April 2005 for subsequent publication.

### Monitor and evaluate implementation

10. Because demonstrating real progress at country level is critical, under the leadership of the partner country we will periodically assess, qualitatively as well as quantitatively, our mutual progress at country level in implementing agreed commitments on aid effectiveness. In doing so, we will make use of appropriate country level mechanisms.

11. At the international level, we call on the partnership of donors and partner countries hosted by the DAC to broaden partner country participation and, by the end of 2005, to propose arrangements for the medium term monitoring of the commitments in this Declaration. In the meantime, we ask the partnership to co-ordinate the international monitoring of the Indicators of Progress included in Section III; to refine targets as necessary; to provide appropriate guidance to establish baselines; and to enable consistent aggregation of information across a range of countries to be summed up in a periodic report. We will also use existing peer review mechanisms and regional reviews to support progress in this agenda. We will, in addition, explore independent cross-country monitoring and evaluation processes – which should be applied without imposing additional burdens on partners – to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how increased aid effectiveness contributes to meeting development objectives.

12. Consistent with the focus on implementation, we plan to meet again in 2008 in a developing country and conduct two rounds of monitoring before then to review progress in implementing this Declaration.

## II. Partnership Commitments

13. Developed in a spirit of mutual accountability, these Partnership Commitments are based on the lessons of experience. We recognise that commitments need to be interpreted in the light of the specific situation of each partner country.

### OWNERSHIP

#### Partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies, and strategies and co-ordinate development actions

14. **Partner countries** commit to:

- Exercise leadership in developing and implementing their national development strategies<sup>2</sup> through broad consultative processes.
- Translate these national development strategies into prioritised results-oriented operational programmes as expressed in medium-term expenditure frameworks and annual budgets (**Indicator 1**).
- Take the lead in co-ordinating aid at all levels in conjunction with other development resources in dialogue with donors and encouraging the participation of civil society and the private sector.

15. **Donors** commit to:

- Respect partner country leadership and help strengthen their capacity to exercise it.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'national development strategies' includes poverty reduction and similar overarching strategies as well as sector and thematic strategies.



## ALIGNMENT

### Donors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures

#### Donors align with partners' strategies

16. **Donors** commit to:

- Base their overall support — country strategies, policy dialogues and development co-operation programmes — on partners' national development strategies and periodic reviews of progress in implementing these strategies<sup>3</sup> (**Indicator 3**).
- Draw conditions, whenever possible, from a partner's national development strategy or its annual review of progress in implementing this strategy. Other conditions would be included only when a sound justification exists and would be undertaken transparently and in close consultation with other donors and stakeholders.
- Link funding to a single framework of conditions and/or a manageable set of indicators derived from the national development strategy. This does not mean that all donors have identical conditions, but that each donor's conditions should be derived from a common streamlined framework aimed at achieving lasting results.

#### Donors use strengthened country systems

17. Using a country's own institutions and systems, where these provide assurance that aid will be used for agreed purposes, increases aid effectiveness by strengthening the partner country's sustainable capacity to develop, implement and account for its policies to its citizens and parliament. Country systems and procedures typically include, but are not restricted to, national arrangements and procedures for public financial management, accounting, auditing, procurement, results frameworks and monitoring.

18. Diagnostic reviews are an important — and growing — source of information to governments and donors on the state of country systems in partner countries. Partner countries and donors have a shared interest in being able to monitor progress over time in improving country systems. They are assisted by performance assessment frameworks, and an associated set of reform measures, that build on the information set out in diagnostic reviews and related analytical work.

19. **Partner countries** and **donors** jointly commit to:

- Work together to establish mutually agreed frameworks that provide reliable assessments of performance, transparency and accountability of country systems (**Indicator 2**).
- Integrate diagnostic reviews and performance assessment frameworks within country-led strategies for capacity development.

20. **Partner countries** commit to:

- Carry out diagnostic reviews that provide reliable assessments of country systems and procedures.
- On the basis of such diagnostic reviews, undertake reforms that may be necessary to ensure that national systems, institutions and procedures for managing aid and other development resources are effective, accountable and transparent.
- Undertake reforms, such as public management reform, that may be necessary to launch and fuel sustainable capacity development processes.

21. **Donors** commit to:

- Use country systems and procedures to the maximum extent possible. Where use of country systems is not feasible, establish additional safeguards and measures in ways that strengthen rather than undermine country systems and procedures (**Indicator 5**).

<sup>3</sup> This includes for example the Annual Progress Review of the Poverty Reduction Strategies (APR).

- Avoid, to the maximum extent possible, creating dedicated structures for day-to-day management and implementation of aid-financed projects and programmes (**Indicator 6**).
- Adopt harmonised performance assessment frameworks for country systems so as to avoid presenting partner countries with an excessive number of potentially conflicting targets.

### **Partner countries strengthen development capacity with support from donors**

22. The capacity to plan, manage, implement, and account for results of policies and programmes, is critical for achieving development objectives — from analysis and dialogue through implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Capacity development is the responsibility of partner countries with donors playing a support role. It needs not only to be based on sound technical analysis, but also to be responsive to the broader social, political and economic environment, including the need to strengthen human resources.

23. **Partner countries** commit to:

- Integrate specific capacity strengthening objectives in national development strategies and pursue their implementation through country-led capacity development strategies where needed.

24. **Donors** commit to:

- Align their analytic and financial support with partners' capacity development objectives and strategies, make effective use of existing capacities and harmonise support for capacity development accordingly (**Indicator 4**).

### **Strengthen public financial management capacity**

25. **Partner countries** commit to:

- Intensify efforts to mobilise domestic resources, strengthen fiscal sustainability, and create an enabling environment for public and private investments.
- Publish timely, transparent and reliable reporting on budget execution.
- Take leadership of the public financial management reform process.

26. **Donors** commit to:

- Provide reliable indicative commitments of aid over a multi-year framework and disburse aid in a timely and predictable fashion according to agreed schedules (**Indicator 7**).
- Rely to the maximum extent possible on transparent partner government budget and accounting mechanisms (**Indicator 5**).

27. **Partner countries** and **donors** jointly commit to:

- Implement harmonised diagnostic reviews and performance assessment frameworks in public financial management.

### **Strengthen national procurement systems**

28. **Partner countries** and **donors** jointly commit to:

- Use mutually agreed standards and processes<sup>4</sup> to carry out diagnostics, develop sustainable reforms and monitor implementation.
- Commit sufficient resources to support and sustain medium and long-term procurement reforms and capacity development.
- Share feedback at the country level on recommended approaches so they can be improved over time.

<sup>4</sup> Such as the processes developed by the joint OECD-DAC – World Bank Round Table on Strengthening Procurement Capacities in Developing Countries.



29. **Partner countries** commit to take leadership and implement the procurement reform process.
30. **Donors** commit to:
- Progressively rely on partner country systems for procurement when the country has implemented mutually agreed standards and processes (**Indicator 5**).
  - Adopt harmonised approaches when national systems do not meet mutually agreed levels of performance or donors do not use them.

### **Untie aid: getting better value for money**

31. Untying aid generally increases aid effectiveness by reducing transaction costs for partner countries and improving country ownership and alignment. **DAC Donors** will continue to make progress on untying as encouraged by the 2001 DAC Recommendation on Untying Official Development Assistance to the Least Developed Countries (**Indicator 8**).

## **HARMONISATION**

**Donors' actions are more harmonised, transparent and collectively effective**

### **Donors implement common arrangements and simplify procedures**

32. **Donors** commit to:
- Implement the donor action plans that they have developed as part of the follow-up to the Rome High-Level Forum.
  - Implement, where feasible, common arrangements at country level for planning, funding (e.g. joint financial arrangements), disbursement, monitoring, evaluating and reporting to government on donor activities and aid flows. Increased use of programme-based aid modalities can contribute to this effort (**Indicator 9**).
  - Work together to reduce the number of separate, duplicative, missions to the field and diagnostic reviews (**Indicator 10**); and promote joint training to share lessons learnt and build a community of practice.

### **Complementarity: more effective division of labour**

33. Excessive fragmentation of aid at global, country or sector level impairs aid effectiveness. A pragmatic approach to the division of labour and burden sharing increases complementarity and can reduce transaction costs.

34. **Partner countries** commit to:
- Provide clear views on donors' comparative advantage and on how to achieve donor complementarity at country or sector level.
35. **Donors** commit to:
- Make full use of their respective comparative advantage at sector or country level by delegating, where appropriate, authority to lead donors for the execution of programmes, activities and tasks.
  - Work together to harmonise separate procedures.

### **Incentives for collaborative behaviour**

36. **Donors and partner countries** jointly commit to:
- Reform procedures and strengthen incentives—including for recruitment, appraisal and training—for management and staff to work towards harmonisation, alignment and results.

### Delivering effective aid in fragile states<sup>5</sup>

37. The long-term vision for international engagement in fragile states is to build legitimate, effective and resilient state and other country institutions. While the guiding principles of effective aid apply equally to fragile states, they need to be adapted to environments of weak ownership and capacity and to immediate needs for basic service delivery.

38. **Partner countries** commit to:

- Make progress towards building institutions and establishing governance structures that deliver effective governance, public safety, security, and equitable access to basic social services for their citizens.
- Engage in dialogue with donors on developing simple planning tools, such as the transitional results matrix, where national development strategies are not yet in place.
- Encourage broad participation of a range of national actors in setting development priorities.

39. **Donors** commit to:

- Harmonise their activities. Harmonisation is all the more crucial in the absence of strong government leadership. It should focus on upstream analysis, joint assessments, joint strategies, co-ordination of political engagement; and practical initiatives such as the establishment of joint donor offices.
- Align to the maximum extent possible behind central government-led strategies or, if that is not possible, donors should make maximum use of country, regional, sector or non-government systems.
- Avoid activities that undermine national institution building, such as bypassing national budget processes or setting high salaries for local staff.
- Use an appropriate mix of aid instruments, including support for recurrent financing, particularly for countries in promising but high-risk transitions.

### Promoting a harmonised approach to environmental assessments

40. Donors have achieved considerable progress in harmonisation around environmental impact assessment (EIA) including relevant health and social issues at the project level. This progress needs to be deepened, including on addressing implications of global environmental issues such as climate change, desertification and loss of biodiversity.

41. **Donors and partner countries** jointly commit to:

- Strengthen the application of EIAs and deepen common procedures for projects, including consultations with stakeholders; and develop and apply common approaches for “strategic environmental assessment” at the sector and national levels.
- Continue to develop the specialised technical and policy capacity necessary for environmental analysis and for enforcement of legislation.

42. Similar harmonisation efforts are also needed on other cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality and other thematic issues including those financed by dedicated funds.

## MANAGING FOR RESULTS

### Managing resources and improving decision-making for results

43. Managing for results means managing and implementing aid in a way that focuses on the desired results and uses information to improve decision-making.

<sup>5</sup> The following section draws on the draft Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States, which emerged from the Senior Level Forum on Development Effectiveness in Fragile States (London, January 2005).



44. **Partner countries** commit to:
- Strengthen the linkages between national development strategies and annual and multi-annual budget processes.
  - Endeavour to establish results-oriented reporting and assessment frameworks that monitor progress against key dimensions of the national and sector development strategies; and that these frameworks should track a manageable number of indicators for which data are cost-effectively available (**Indicator 11**).
45. **Donors** commit to:
- Link country programming and resources to results and align them with effective partner country performance assessment frameworks, refraining from requesting the introduction of performance indicators that are not consistent with partners' national development strategies.
  - Work with partner countries to rely, as far as possible, on partner countries' results-oriented reporting and monitoring frameworks.
  - Harmonise their monitoring and reporting requirements, and, until they can rely more extensively on partner countries' statistical, monitoring and evaluation systems, with partner countries to the maximum extent possible on joint formats for periodic reporting.
46. **Partner countries** and **donors** jointly commit to:
- Work together in a participatory approach to strengthen country capacities and demand for results based management.

## **MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **Donors and partners are accountable for development results**

47. A major priority for partner countries and donors is to enhance mutual accountability and transparency in the use of development resources. This also helps strengthen public support for national policies and development assistance.
48. **Partner countries** commit to:
- Strengthen as appropriate the parliamentary role in national development strategies and/or budgets.
  - Reinforce participatory approaches by systematically involving a broad range of development partners when formulating and assessing progress in implementing national development strategies.
49. **Donors** commit to:
- Provide timely, transparent and comprehensive information on aid flows so as to enable partner authorities to present comprehensive budget reports to their legislatures and citizens.
50. **Partner countries** and **donors** commit to:
- Jointly assess through existing and increasingly objective country level mechanisms mutual progress in implementing agreed commitments on aid effectiveness, including the Partnership Commitments. (**Indicator 12**).

### III. Indicators of Progress

To be measured nationally and monitored internationally

OWNERSHIP		TARGET FOR 2010
1	<i>Partners have operational development strategies</i> — Number of countries with national development strategies (including PRSs) that have clear strategic priorities linked to a medium-term expenditure framework and reflected in annual budgets.	<b>At least 75% of partner countries</b> have operational development strategies.
ALIGNMENT		TARGETS FOR 2010
2	<i>Reliable country systems</i> — Number of partner countries that have procurement and public financial management systems that either (a) adhere to broadly accepted good practices or (b) have a reform programme in place to achieve these.	(a) <b>Half of partner countries</b> move up at least one measure (i.e., 0.5 points) on the PFM/ CPIA (Country Policy and Institutional Assessment) scale of performance.  (b) <b>One-third of partner countries</b> move up at least one measure (i.e., from D to C, C to B or B to A) on the four-point scale used to assess performance for this indicator.
3	<i>Aid flows are aligned on national priorities</i> — Percent of aid flows to the government sector that is reported on partners' national budgets.	<b>Halve the gap</b> — halve the proportion of aid flows to government sector not reported on government's budget(s) (with at least 85% reported on budget).
4	<i>Strengthen capacity by co-ordinated support</i> — Percent of donor capacity-development support provided through co-ordinated programmes consistent with partners' national development strategies.	<b>50% of technical co-operation flows</b> are implemented through co-ordinated programmes consistent with national development strategies.
5a	<i>Use of country procurement systems</i> — Percent of donors and of aid flows that use partner country procurement systems which either (a) adhere to broadly accepted good practices or (b) have a reform programme in place to achieve these.	<b>PERCENT OF DONORS</b>
		<b>Score*</b> <b>Target</b>
		A <b>All donors</b> use partner countries' procurement systems.
		B <b>90% of donors</b> use partner countries' procurement systems.
		<b>PERCENT OF AID FLOWS</b>
		<b>Score*</b> <b>Target</b>
A <b>A two-thirds reduction</b> in the % of aid to the public sector not using partner countries' procurement systems.		
B <b>A one-third reduction</b> in the % of aid to the public sector not using partner countries' procurement systems.		
5b	<i>Use of country public financial management systems</i> — Percent of donors and of aid flows that use public financial management systems in partner countries, which either (a) adhere to broadly accepted good practices or (b) have a reform programme in place to achieve these.	<b>PERCENT OF DONORS</b>
		<b>Score*</b> <b>Target</b>
		5+ <b>All donors</b> use partner countries' PFM systems.
		3.5 to 4.5 <b>90% of donors</b> use partner countries' PFM systems.
		<b>PERCENT OF AID FLOWS</b>
		<b>Score*</b> <b>Target</b>
5+ <b>A two-thirds reduction</b> in the % of aid to the public sector not using partner countries' PFM systems.		
3.5 to 4.5 <b>A one-third reduction</b> in the % of aid to the public sector not using partner countries' PFM systems.		



6	<i>Strengthen capacity by avoiding parallel implementation structures</i> — Number of parallel project implementation units (PIUs) per country.	<b>Reduce by two-thirds</b> the stock of parallel project implementation units (PIUs).
7	<i>Aid is more predictable</i> — Percent of aid disbursements released according to agreed schedules in annual or multi-year frameworks.	<b>Halve the gap</b> — halve the proportion of aid not disbursed within the fiscal year for which it was scheduled.
8	<i>Aid is untied</i> — Percent of bilateral aid that is untied.	<b>Continued progress over time.</b>
<b>HARMONISATION</b>		<b>TARGETS FOR 2010</b>
9	<i>Use of common arrangements or procedures</i> — Percent of aid provided as programme-based approaches <sup>6</sup>	<b>66% of aid flows</b> are provided in the context of programme-based approaches.
10	<i>Encourage shared analysis</i> — Percent of (a) field missions and/or (b) country analytic work, including diagnostic reviews that are joint.	<b>(a) 40% of donor missions</b> to the field are joint.
		<b>(b) 66% of country analytic work is joint.</b>
<b>MANAGING FOR RESULTS</b>		<b>TARGET FOR 2010</b>
11	<i>Results-oriented frameworks</i> — Number of countries with transparent and monitorable performance assessment frameworks to assess progress against (a) the national development strategies and (b) sector programmes.	<b>Reduce the gap by one-third</b> — Reduce the proportion of countries without transparent and monitorable performance assessment frameworks by one-third.
<b>MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY</b>		<b>TARGET FOR 2010</b>
12	<i>Mutual accountability</i> — Number of partner countries that undertake mutual assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments on aid effectiveness including those in this Declaration.	<b>All partner countries</b> have mutual assessment reviews in place.

**Important Note:** In accordance with paragraph 9 of the Declaration, the partnership of donors and partner countries hosted by the DAC (Working Party on Aid Effectiveness) comprising OECD/DAC members, partner countries and multilateral institutions, met twice, on 30-31 May 2005 and on 7-8 July 2005 to adopt, and review where appropriate, the targets for the twelve Indicators of Progress. At these meetings an agreement was reached on the targets presented under Section III of the present Declaration. This agreement is subject to reservations by one donor on (a) the methodology for assessing the quality of locally-managed procurement systems (relating to targets 2b and 5b) and (b) the acceptable quality of public financial management reform programmes (relating to target 5a.ii). Further discussions are underway to address these issues. The targets, including the reservation, have been notified to the Chairs of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the 60th General Assembly of the United Nations in a letter of 9 September 2005 by Mr. Richard Manning, Chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

**Notes on Indicator 5:** Scores for Indicator 5 are determined by the methodology used to measure quality of procurement and public financial management systems under Indicator 2 above.

<sup>6</sup> See methodological notes for a definition of programme based approaches.

## Appendix A: Methodological Notes on the Indicators of Progress

The Indicators of Progress provides a framework in which to make operational the responsibilities and accountabilities that are framed in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. This framework draws selectively from the Partnership Commitments presented in Section II of this Declaration.

**Purpose** — The Indicators of Progress provide a framework in which to make operational the responsibilities and accountabilities that are framed in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. They measure principally **collective behaviour at the country level**.

**Country level vs. global level** — The indicators are to be **measured at the country level** in close collaboration between partner countries and donors. Values of country level indicators can then be statistically aggregated at the **regional or global level**. This global aggregation would be done both for the country panel mentioned below, for purposes of statistical comparability, and more broadly for all partner countries for which relevant data are available.

**Donor / Partner country performance** — The indicators of progress also provide a **benchmark against which individual donor agencies or partner countries can measure their performance** at the country, regional, or global level. In measuring individual donor performance, the indicators should be applied with flexibility in the recognition that donors have different institutional mandates.

**Targets** — The targets are set at the global level. Progress against these targets is to be measured by aggregating data measured at the country level. In addition to global targets, partner countries and donors in a given country might agree on country-level targets.

**Baseline** — A baseline will be established for 2005 in a panel of self-selected countries. The partnership of donors and partner countries hosted by the DAC (Working Party on Aid Effectiveness) is asked to establish this panel.

**Definitions and criteria** — The partnership of donors and partner countries hosted by the DAC (Working Party on Aid Effectiveness) is asked to provide specific guidance on definitions, scope of application, criteria and methodologies to assure that results can be aggregated across countries and across time.

**Note on Indicator 9** — Programme based approaches are defined in Volume 2 of Harmonising Donor Practices for Effective Aid Delivery (OECD, 2005) in Box 3.1 as a way of engaging in development cooperation based on the principles of co-ordinated support for a locally owned programme of development, such as a national development strategy, a sector programme, a thematic programme or a programme of a specific organisation. Programme based approaches share the following features: (a) leadership by the host country or organisation; (b) a single comprehensive programme and budget framework; (c) a formalised process for donor co-ordination and harmonisation of donor procedures for reporting, budgeting, financial management and procurement; (d) Efforts to increase the use of local systems for programme design and implementation, financial management, monitoring and evaluation. For the purpose of indicator 9 performance will be measured separately across the aid modalities that contribute to programme-based approaches.



## APPENDIX B: List of Participating Countries and Organisations

### Participating Countries

Albania	Australia	Austria
Bangladesh	Belgium	Benin
Bolivia	Botswana	[Brazil]*
Burkina Faso	Burundi	Cambodia
Cameroon	Canada	China
Congo D.R.	Czech Republic	Denmark
Dominican Republic	Egypt	Ethiopia
European Commission	Fiji	Finland
France	Gambia, The	Germany
Ghana	Greece	Guatemala
Guinea	Honduras	Iceland
Indonesia	Ireland	Italy
Jamaica	Japan	Jordan
Kenya	Korea	Kuwait
Kyrgyz Republic	Lao PDR	Luxembourg
Madagascar	Malawi	Malaysia
Mali	Mauritania	Mexico
Mongolia	Morocco	Mozambique
Nepal	Netherlands	New Zealand
Nicaragua	Niger	Norway
Pakistan	Papua New Guinea	Philippines
Poland	Portugal	Romania
Russian Federation	Rwanda	Saudi Arabia
Senegal	Serbia and Montenegro	Slovak Republic
Solomon Islands	South Africa	Spain
Sri Lanka	Sweden	Switzerland
Tajikistan	Tanzania	Thailand
Timor-Leste	Tunisia	Turkey
Uganda	United Kingdom	United States of America
Vanuatu	Vietnam	Yemen
Zambia		

\* To be confirmed.

### Participating Organisations

African Development Bank	Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa
Asian Development Bank	Commonwealth Secretariat
Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP)	Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)	Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA -FTI)
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	European Investment Bank (EIB)
Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria	G24
Inter-American Development Bank	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	International Organisation of the Francophonie
Islamic Development Bank	Millennium Campaign
New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)	Nordic Development Fund
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)
OPEC Fund for International Development	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
United Nations Development Group (UNDG)	World Bank

### Civil Society Organisations

Africa Humanitarian Action	AFRODAD
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundations	Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC)
Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement (CCFD)	Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité (CIDSE)
Comisión Económica (Nicaragua)	ENDA Tiers Monde
EURODAD	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)
Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC)	Reality of Aid Network
Tanzania Social and Economic Trust (TASOET)	UK Aid Network

**Appendix 2: Template of Interview Guide for Projects One and Two**

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**Guide questions for semi-structured interviews****(Case Study)****A. General (for Coordinators of organisations in donor countries)**

1. Could you give me a brief introduction to the work of your organisation?
2. To what extent is your organisation reliant on (name of funder) aid to execute its work?
3. Are there other important donors (other NGOs, governments, foundations, etc) on which your work relies?
4. Do any of them fund your work specifically on gender-related projects/ programmes?

**B. The Paris Declaration and Aid Effectiveness**

5. Are you aware of the new aid effectiveness agenda or the Paris Declaration?
6. Prior to the aid effectiveness agenda, when thinking about the impact of your projects and the way in which they were implemented, did you think terms of the word 'effectiveness' or was there any other manner, word, or phrase to describe this?
7. In light of the recent changes in the management and delivery of aid brought about by the aid effectiveness agenda/ Paris Declaration, have there been any changes on how your organisation carries out its work?
8. Do you think you have had to change your approach to measuring/ reporting impact to fit in the new aid effectiveness framework?
9. Have the (name of funder) required or set any expectations of specific indicators or reporting mechanisms for your organisation to employ when reporting on the effectiveness of projects? If so, what are they?
10. From your other donors, do any require you use specific reporting mechanisms or indicators? If so, what are they?
11. Are there limitations to the use of the (new) reporting mechanisms/ indicators? If so, how do you deal with those limitations?

**C. Gender and Effectiveness**



12. Do any of your donors require you to report on the gender impact of your projects/ programmes?
13. Is measuring for gender important to your organisation? Why?
14. Do you use gender-based approaches and/or strategies to measuring the success of your projects? If so, what are they?
15. Do you use indicators like the Gender Inequality Index or such in evaluating your projects? If so, to what extent? If not, why not?

**D. About Project One (questions for Project Coordinator)**

16. Why, how and by whom was this project conceptualised?
17. Do any of your donors fund you specifically on indigenous women grounds?
18. How was AMICA selected as a partner organisation?
19. How are the participants of the project selected?
20. Are there any gender-based considerations taken in the selection process?
21. What language do you communicate in with AMICA? If there are language barriers, how do you go about overcoming them?
22. Are participants involved in the planning of the project? If so, how? If not, why not?
23. What are the reporting/ accountability mechanisms of the project to 1) its donors and 2) its beneficiaries?

**E. Project One and Effectiveness**

24. How do you know if the project has been successful?
25. Do you define effectiveness for this project differently than for project one?
26. What criteria or indicators are used to measure the effectiveness/ success/ impact of this project?
27. Do you use the Paris Declaration indicators to measure effectiveness for this project?
28. Do you use gender indicators or gender-based criteria as part of the evaluation/ assessment exercise for this project?
29. How were those criteria/ indicators decided upon? What informs their selection?
30. In assessing this project, do you think that the Paris Declaration indicators of aid effectiveness can tell us whether the project has been effective?

31. Is there a difference between how the project's objectives are measured and how impact is measured?

**F. Gender and Effectiveness**

32. Are there criteria specific to indigenous women used by your organisation to evaluate this project? If so, what are the criteria? If yes, how were these developed? If not, do you think there should be?
33. In light of the new aid effectiveness agenda, are you required by the (name of funder) to report in a specific format or using distinct indicators for projects involving indigenous people generally and / or for indigenous women in particular? If so, what are they?
34. Do any of your *other* donors require you to use specific criteria to indigenous women when evaluating/ reporting on this project?
35. In assessing the impact of this project, how does working with indigenous women differ from working with non-indigenous women? What is your approach? What informs this approach?
36. Do you feel there are there limitations to the indicators you currently use (from the new aid effectiveness agenda) to evaluate this project? If so, what are these?
37. Is the broader/ unintended gender impact (outside of the project scope) measured or captured in any way? If so, what is done with this information? If this information is shared, whom is it shared with?

**G. About Project One (questions for Director of AMICA in Nicaragua)**

38. How would you describe your relationship with Horizons?
39. Do you feel free to communicate with Horizons about concerns arising from the implementation of the project?
40. What is the language of the project's beneficiaries? How does AMICA go about translating the inputs from the project beneficiaries to communications with Horizons?
41. How are the evaluations of the project planned? Does AMICA design the evaluation strategies/ tools or are they pre-agreed with Horizons based on some pre-existing criteria?
42. If AMICA designs the evaluation mechanism/ tool, are participants involved in this planning or are the mechanisms/ tools devised by AMICA staff?



43. How do you determine whether the project has been effective/ successful?
- a. Does Horizons ask you to evaluate the project by using specific criteria? (cost effectiveness, efficiency, capacity, results)? If so, what criteria do you evaluate by?
  - b. Do you measure for gender impact? How?
  - c. Your project is aimed at empowering women but it also involves men. How would you define an effective intervention in relation to your beneficiaries' lives?
  - d. Your project involves supporting women who have experienced violence, how do you assess effective action in relation to this issue?
  - e. Your project also educates women on how to access justice mechanisms, how do you define effective action in relation to this issue?
44. Are there follow up activities after the trainings for project participants?
45. What area (s) of your project do participants seem to gain the most?
46. What do participants value most about the project?
47. Have there been any unintended consequences (positive or negative) to the life of the participants following their involvement in the project (further violence or death, new employment or loss of employment, stigmatisation or new leadership roles, etc)
48. What kinds of activities do women tend to engage in following their participation on your project?
49. What kinds of activities do men tend to engage in following their participation on your project (as a result of the project)?

**Appendix 3: Template of Interview Guide for OECD/ GENDERNET Staff**

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**Interview guide regarding the creation of gender-sensitive indicators to monitor aid effectiveness (OECD/ GENDERNET)****Questions:**

1. Could you provide a description of the process of developing the optional module and its indicators?
2. In light of existing relationships with the European Commission and UN Women, to what extent can it be said that the optional module's indicators were informed/ influenced by those produced by the EC/UN Partnership for Development and Peace, or by the indicators produced by the African Gender and Development Evaluators Network – AGDEN?
3. While the links between the 3 Paris Declaration principles that the module indicators focus on and the Accra Agenda for Action are clear, were there any other factors behind the decision of focusing on the (Paris Declaration) principles Ownership, Managing for Results and Mutual Accountability? What motivated this decision?
4. Is the secretariat of GENDERNET sufficiently supported and resourced to carry out its work on indicators? Are there specific departments or people within the OECD or GENDERNET that the Secretariat works with in relation to the development of indicators?
5. Can you provide commentary on whether the GENDERNET (including the Secretariat) felt enabled or constrained by any given factor (institutional mandate, politics, etc) in the development of the optional module and its indicators?
6. Do you have any comments regarding how the process of developing the optional module influences GENDERNET's approach to the post-Busan gender equality indicator (even though the latter is part of a different process)?
7. To what extent have GENDERNET indicators influenced or impact newer approaches to aid / development effectiveness indicators?



## Appendix 4: Template of Consent Form Used for Interviews

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**TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN**  
**SCHOOL OF RELIGIONS, THEOLOGY AND ECUMENICS**  
**CONSENT FORM**

Engendering Effectiveness: A Gender Critique of the New Aid Architecture

Research Student: Astrid V. Pérez Piñán

Research Supervisors: Dr. Gillian Wylie and Dr. Iain Atack

Thank you for your disposition to participate in this project regarding my doctoral research work on indicators of aid effectiveness. This is to let you know about the specificities of the study and about your rights so that you can make an informed decision regarding your participation. Once you have read the document, please indicate your consent to participate by signing this form at the end of the page.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the study is to investigate the ways in which aid effectiveness is measured in Nicaragua. The goals of the study are:

- 1) to determine the adequacy and viability of the indicators established in the Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness to measure the effectiveness of aid at the local level.
- 2) to explore and highlight the complexities of using global indicators at the local level and,
- 3) to identify elements of gender-sensitive measures that work well locally based on evidence from the projects.

The final analysis will look critically at the need to generate gender-sensitive indicators of aid effectiveness, what are the effects of measuring in gender-sensitive ways in the projects' success and whether there are limits to these measures.

### **YOUR RIGHTS**

Like most academic research, this study must comply with ethical principles of good research practice established by the university as follow:

1. *Confidentiality*: you have the right to maintain your anonymity if you so desire.
2. *Participation in recorded interviews*: To ensure data accuracy and to ease the review and analysis of the information provided by the research participant, interviews regarding this project will be recorded. You have the right to decline recorded interviews. Please inform the researcher if you do not wish the interviews to be recorded.

3. *Right to access information:* you have the right to access this study's information at any time. The information, included recorded interviews, will be stored safely in electronic format in accordance to the university's guidelines and will be disposed of within 5 years.

4. *Right to withdraw from the study:* If at any point you wish to stop your participation in this study you are free to do so. Please cordially inform the researcher in writing about your decision. You also have the right to withdraw any information you have provided to the researcher at any point.

5. *Right to benefit and not be disadvantaged by the research project* – it is not anticipated that the interviews or any part of the research will disadvantage or compromise any member of Horizons of Friendship, Maria Elena Cuadra or AMICA. If you feel that your organisation can benefit from any part of this study, please feel free to discuss it with the research student.

6. *Publication plans:* the publication plans for this work are so far limited to the usual Trinity College Dublin standard for PhD dissertations (copy held at the library). However, it is possible that the chapter related to the case study could be submitted for publication in academic journals at a future time.

7. *Questions about research:* Should you have any questions about this research please feel free to contact Astrid V. Pérez Piñán via email to perezav@tcd.ie or by telephone to +1 778 350 1972. You are also free to contact any of this study's supervisors via email Dr. Gillian Wylie (wylieg@tcd.ie) or Dr. Iain Atack (atacki@tcd.ie) and by telephone to +353 1 896 4771

8. *Rights of research subjects:* The Trinity College Dublin School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics ethics committee has reviewed the researcher's request to conduct this project. If you have any concerns about your rights in this study, you can contact Dr. David Tombs, *Director of Research, School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics*, via email (tombsd@tcd.ie) or by telephone to his Belfast office +44 28 9037 3989.

I understand what is involved in this research and I agree to participate in the study. [*I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.*]

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Signature of participant

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Date

*Signature of researcher*

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

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Signature of researcher

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Date