



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

IOB Evaluation

Gender sense & sensitivity

Policy evaluation on women's rights and
gender equality (2007-2014)

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July 2015

Preface

Twenty years ago, the Beijing Platform for Action was adopted. As ‘an agenda for women’s empowerment’, it aimed at ‘removing all the obstacles to women’s active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making’. It reconfirmed what was agreed upon in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of 1993, i.e. ‘that the human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights’. It also made equality between women and men a precondition for social justice and a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality, development and peace.

Together with the Programme of Action that was adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994 and its focus on women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as the Millennium Development Goals of 2000, ‘Beijing’ remains one of the sources of inspiration for the Netherlands’ policy on women’s rights and gender equality. And rightly so.

This is also evident from this report, which focuses on attention to women’s rights and gender equality in the international policies pursued by the Netherlands in the period 2007-2014. The report not only talks about policies but also makes an effort to reflect on the results that have been realised. Results that are very much needed, since gender equality is often still more a matter of policy *intentions* than policy *implementation* – including in the Netherlands itself. The report also demonstrates that gender sensitivity is needed if we want to contribute to addressing the gendered inequalities that prevail to date.

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Paul G. de Nooijer and Kirsten Mastwijk of IOB wrote the report. IOB senior evaluators Marijke Stegeman and Margret Verwijk acted as internal peer reviewers. External quality control was provided by a reference group, chaired by myself, which monitored the evaluation process and advised on the policy evaluation report. This reference group consisted of a representative of the Ministry’s Task Force Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (Mirjam Krijnen, head of the Task Force), and the following external experts: Serena Cruz (independent consultant), Marleen Dekker (African Studies Centre, Leiden University), and Wendy Janssens (VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam Institute for International Development).

IOB would like to thank the interviewees and the participants in the focus group discussions for generously availing their time and sharing their thoughts. IOB hopes that, together with the other documents that were prepared within the framework of this policy evaluation, this report can help to draw valuable lessons for future policies.

Final responsibility for the report remains with IOB.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
ASF	Acid Survivors Fund (Bangladesh)
CEDAW	Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFJJ	Centre for legal and judicial training (<i>Centro de Formação Jurídica e Judiciária</i> – Mozambique)
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EKN	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
FLOW	Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women
FMO	Entrepreneurial Development Bank (<i>Nederlandse Financierings-Maatschappij voor Ontwikkelingslanden</i>)
GEC	Gender Evaluation Criteria for Large-scale Land Tools
GLTN	Global Land Tool Network
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IDH	The Sustainable Trade Initiative (<i>Initiatief Duurzame Handel</i>)
ILC	International Land Coalition
IOB	Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (<i>Inspectie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Beleidsevaluatie</i>)
KIT	Royal Tropical Institute (<i>Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen</i>)
LDC	Least developed countries
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MASSIF	Micro & Small Enterprise Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MDRP	Multi-country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (Burundi)
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
ORAM	<i>Organização Rural de Ajuda Mútua</i> (Mozambique)
ORET	Development-Related Export Transactions (<i>OntwikkelingsRelevante Export Transacties</i>)
ORIO	Development-Related Infrastructure Development (<i>OntwikkelingsRelevante InfrastructuurOntwikkeling</i>)
PBF	United Nations Peacebuilding Fund
PIDG	Private Infrastructure Development Group
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation (<i>Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers</i>)
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

TFVG	Task Force Women's rights and Gender equality (<i>Task Force Vrouwenrechten en Gendergelijkheid</i>)
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council resolution
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USD	United States Dollar
VAW	Violence against women
WLSA	Women and Law in Southern Africa Research and Education Trust (Mozambique)
WOLAR	Women's Land Rights in Southern Africa (Mozambique)
WRR	Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (<i>Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid</i>)

Main findings and lessons

The aim of this policy evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency of the way in which the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs has implemented its international gender policy between 2007 and 2014. Another aim is to generate lessons for future policy making in this domain. The evaluation covers the stand-alone budget for women's rights and gender equality, as represented by Article 3.2 of the current budget for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. With gender mainstreaming a key characteristic of the international gender policy, the evaluation covers a series of other budget lines as well, including from the budget for Foreign Affairs.

This report reflects the findings of the policy evaluation which took place between November 2013 and June 2015. IOB's evaluation reports about the MDG3 Fund (IOB, 2015a) and the National Action Plans to implement United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (IOB, 2015b) have provided important inputs, as did the literature review on the thematic areas covered (IOB, 2015c). This evaluation also involved an extensive desk study of policy, programme and project documents, evaluation reports, interviews, and short field visits to Bangladesh, Burundi, Egypt and Mozambique.

This summary is structured along the evaluation's main questions, i.e.:

- 1) *What has motivated the Dutch Government to assume an active international role in addressing gender issues?*
- 2) *What have been the objectives and main characteristics of the Ministry's overall international gender equality policy and the strategies used to realise these objectives and what are the links with the Netherlands' national emancipation policy?*
- 3) *Based on this international gender policy, has gender equality been incorporated into country and thematic policies and into concrete interventions and gender-equality focused approaches and is this evident in the different stages of the policy/programme cycle?*
- 4) *What were the results of these interventions in terms of providing better conditions for women and have these results been sustainable?*²
- 5) *What were the financial and institutional resources to implement the Ministry's gender equality policy and were these used efficiently?*

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¹ The three overall emancipation policy documents prepared during the evaluation period are discussed in chapter 2.

² The evaluation has looked at results in terms of output and, whenever possible, of outcome.

Motivation of the international role of government

Successive governments have motivated the Dutch international role in addressing gender issues in the following terms.

There is undisputable evidence that the position of women in many parts of the world, including the Netherlands, remains inferior to that of men. Irrespective of which international gender index or academic sources are used, considerable inequalities persist. Such inequalities affect women's access to healthcare, education and key economic resources, such as credit and agricultural inputs related to land ownership and extension services. They translate into inferior and unstable sources of income and employment. Women's participation in politics, trade unions or producer organisations continues to be low. In the most extreme form of gender inequality, women are frequently victim of various types of violence, with intimate partner violence being the most prevalent. Progressive change has been slow in many countries and is often under threat. This is evident from the negotiations taking place at the level of the United Nations. If change occurs, it is not always for the better.

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These inequalities are a fundamental breach of women's rights as reflected in a series of international agreements, starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979). Following also what was agreed upon in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993) and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the position has been that women ought to have the same rights as men, not only in the Netherlands but also elsewhere.

The human rights that have been agreed upon internationally – whether civil and political or economic, social and cultural – apply to both sexes and are universal. They should apply always and everywhere, regardless of differences in culture, tradition, religion, etc. Customary practices are not an acceptable excuse for states to dismiss existing international commitments.

Policy characteristics

While attention was still paid to women's human rights and their sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender issues had virtually disappeared from the Ministry's agenda in the years prior to 2007. Moreover, specific funding of women's organisations had all but been abolished. This changed considerably with the *Balkenende IV* government when women's rights and gender equality regained their importance. This resurgence in priority is evident from the *Schokland* agreements of 2007 and the subsequent introduction of the MDG3 Fund and the ambitious Dutch National Action Plan to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

Relevant policy statements were made in a variety of documents, reflecting what had been agreed upon internationally. Although the Dutch domestic emancipation policies had an

international paragraph outlining the focus of the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there was no separate international gender policy. This changed in 2011 with the publication of a new policy note by the *Rutte I* government which set high ambitions for the Netherlands. However, it lacked a well-defined intervention logic for how the Netherlands could realise these ambitions. Nor did it formulate realistic and achievable results or provide any indicators for measuring progress.

Still, this policy evaluation found that the main characteristics of Dutch international gender policy have been reasonably consistent over the years and aligned with Dutch national policies. These main characteristics can be summarised as follows.

The interchangeable use of the terms of 'gender' and 'women'

Throughout the years, various terms have been used to define the policy area of women's rights and gender equality. The emphasis has been more on women and less on the issues of gender equality. Gender (in)equality refers to the (unequal) power relations between women and men that have been and are shaped by historical, cultural, religious, economic and social conditions, perceptions, traditions, and beliefs. In general, the approach has been to get women 'on board', coupled with a focus on women's practical needs.

Equal rights as a main starting point for gender policies

The *human rights perspective* described above has been a consistent feature of Dutch international policies and has been very well justified. It has been the basis for challenging inequalities and persistent discrimination and has played a prominent role in policies in an area like combating violence against women. The emphasis on human rights also explains the importance attached to international norms in relation to women's rights and gender equality and the initiatives taken at the level of the United Nations.

A rights-based approach was combined with instrumentalist arguments...

Another key and consistent feature of Dutch policies has been the emphasis on gender mainstreaming. This was also advocated by the Beijing Platform for Action: attention to women's rights and gender equality was to be part and parcel of donors' foreign and development policies, programmes and projects. To make sure that this mainstreaming was put into reality, Dutch policies have increasingly incorporated *instrumentalist* arguments. The rationale is that including women's rights and gender equality is good for economic development and poverty reduction (smart economics), for more inclusive decision-making and more stable and sustainable societies (smart politics), and for international security (smart security).

... which have a weak evidence base

However, a review of the international literature shows that the evidence base for these instrumentalist arguments is limited. While incorporating women may be 'smart economics' from a macro perspective, this does not mean that 'smart economics' also works for women: the evidence that gender equality, particularly in education and employment, contributes to economic growth is far more consistent and robust than the evidence that economic growth contributes to gender equality in terms of health, wellbeing and rights.

The evidence that pushing for more women into politics by setting a target of 30% female politicians also works *for women* is limited and contradictory, and for an area like peace and security this evidence has been absent up till now. At the same time, there does seem to be evidence that supports the premises underlying the interventions for education. Therefore, from a rights-based perspective, such instrumentalist arguments are in fact not needed. They may even be counterproductive when focusing on women's specific needs and priorities and assisting them to overcome the numerous barriers they face.

Gender mainstreaming into policies, programmes and projects

Mainstreaming of women's rights and gender equality has not been consistent at policy level

At policy level, gender mainstreaming has been propagated in a range of policies and programmes, clear examples being the attention paid to women in land rights and food security policies and to the education of girls in education policies. At the same time, gender mainstreaming has not been consistent across sectors and priority themes. For example, women's rights and gender equality were given minimal or no attention in e.g. the policy documents concerning private sector development in developing countries (2011), corporate social responsibility (2012), or the international security strategy (2013). The international literature demonstrates that when this is the case at policy level, gender mainstreaming in policy implementation is unlikely to happen.

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Combination of mainstreaming and a stand-alone track supporting women's organisations, but no evidence of mutual reinforcement between the two

For the implementation of its international gender policy, the Netherlands, like many other donors, has added a stand-alone track to support women's organisations to a gender-mainstreaming track. This stand-alone track, which was abolished in 2002, was reintroduced in 2008 when EUR 77 million was made available for the MDG3 Fund (2008-2011). This Fund was later followed by the programme Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women (FLOW) (2012-2015) with a budget of EUR 80 million.

The international gender policy of 2011 emphasised the synergic linkage between the stand-alone and mainstreaming tracks, although without really specifying how this would work. This evaluation did not find clear evidence that these two tracks were 'mutually reinforcing', as was the intention. The MDG3 Fund and FLOW had global coverage, but had little – if any – links with other foreign policy or development interventions supported by the Netherlands.

Emphasis on a series of relevant themes

Over the years, Dutch foreign and development policies have been emphasising women's rights and gender equality in relation to a series of priority themes. These concerned violence against women, education (until 2010 when it was decided to discontinue Dutch support for basic education), politics, economic development, food security and peace and

security. This is also true for sexual reproductive health and rights, which have remained outside the scope of this policy evaluation as these were addressed in IOB's policy evaluation on SRHR (IOB, 2013a).

Translating gender policy priorities to programme and project level has not been consistent

A general tendency observed by this evaluation is that when political priorities are translated into programmes and projects, women's rights and gender equality issues risk disappearing. Contributing factors identified include little accountability and limited (technical) capacity to ensure that women's rights and gender equality issues have a clear place in the programme cycle. This holds especially for those programmes and projects that are managed or implemented by third parties on behalf of the Ministry.

In total, looking at the different priority themes the following pattern emerges:

The priority attached to *combating violence against women (VAW)* is reflected in the priorities for the MDG3 Fund and FLOW, the Human Rights Fund, the National Action Plans to implement UNSCR 1325 as well as country programmes and projects, examples being Bangladesh and Mozambique. Violence against women in general and against women and girls in (post) conflict countries in particular has been consistently addressed in Dutch diplomatic interventions and involvement in negotiations at the level of the United Nations and the Council of Europe. Violence also featured in the international trade union programmes with the attention to women experiencing violence on the work floor. In *education*, women's rights and gender equality have featured in country programmes and agreements with multi-donor funds, such as the Education for All Fast Track Initiative. Initiatives to take on board the concerns of women and girls in support for (basic) education have often been successful. The theme of *women's leadership and political participation* has been gaining importance. Although the concept itself was never developed, it was a priority under the stand-alone Funds and the 'Women on the Frontline' initiative. Political participation also became the core of the second National Action Plan to implement UNSCR 1325. Nevertheless, the 'Fund Political Parties II' fails to address the issue of women's leadership. The theme *women's access to productive resources* was made a priority under the MDG3 Fund as well as FLOW. Emphasising the issue of women's land rights, it was also incorporated in country programmes in countries like Burundi, Mozambique and Rwanda and multilateral programmes that were supported by the Netherlands, such as the International Land Coalition and the Global Land Tool Network.

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On the other hand, women's rights and gender equality are almost historically and virtually absent from many centrally financed *private sector development* programmes. Policy wise, it would behove the new Dutch Good Growth Fund to break with this tradition. Yet it remains to be seen what the mid-term review of the Fund will have to say on how this works out in practice. Moreover, attention to women's rights and gender equality has remained limited in the main programmes the Ministry runs in the area of *peace and security* (the Stability Fund, the Reconstruction Fund). This also holds for the UN Peacebuilding Fund.

Relevant use of multilateral and EU channels for contributing to norm setting and keeping women's rights on the international agenda

The Ministry has used various United Nations bodies as forums for lobby and advocacy, setting international gender norms, and for ensuring that UN Member States (better) live up to these norms. The focus has been on violence against women in general and against women and girls in (post) conflict countries in particular in conjunction with UNSCR 1325. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also supported the pivotal role of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science at this level.

The efforts deployed at EU level focused on establishing policies that are applicable in the European member states and on incorporating women's rights and gender equality in EU development and foreign policies, in particular the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. However, a recent evaluation report on this Plan of Action is quite critical about its achievements (European Commission, 2015).

Even though results are difficult to measure, these diplomatic interventions have more than merely a symbolic value. What the current national emancipation policy has referred to as the 'maintenance' of these international gender norms in the face of increasing opposition, remains relevant. Moreover, these norms are a prime source for local human rights and women's organisations to lobby and advocate for national compliance and to hold governments accountable for their acts.

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International norms on women's rights served as a framework for bilateral political dialogue

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has addressed gender equality and women's rights in both its bilateral policy and in its political dialogue. The international norms mentioned above have been an important point of reference for this dialogue. Factors that have facilitated this dialogue include the long-term presence in the country and/or the sector, the weight of the Dutch contribution, cooperation with like-minded donors, and the availability of gender expertise. Gender equality and women's rights also featured in Dutch bilateral programmes at country level. The extent to which this was done and the priority themes addressed varied, depending on country context and the available resources.

Little interaction between similar initiatives

As the MDG3 Fund evaluation (IOB, 2015a) observes, there has been little apparent interaction between projects financed by the MDG3 Fund and the bilaterally financed projects, even though some of them were implemented in the same thematic areas and in the same countries. Similar findings concern the projects funded under the NAP UNSCR 1325 and the Women on the Frontline initiative: both focus on women's political participation, work with (local) women's organisations, and are (partially) implemented by the same Dutch civil society organisations in the same region.

Effectiveness

Gender analyses have been a rare phenomenon

Dutch policies have recognised that women's needs and women's priorities are different from those of men. What is more, the literature on violence against women, women's political participation and women peace and security underscores the importance of addressing underlying factors, including gender norms, which hamper women from realising these rights. However, contextualised gender analyses are rarely used when designing policies, policies, programmes and projects.

Insight into effectiveness remains limited

This evaluation shows that there is limited knowledge of the effectiveness of Dutch gender policies. At times, projects were still in an early stage of implementation and had not yet produced any significant results. However, a general tendency is that reports and evaluations rarely go beyond informing on the activities carried out. To a lesser extent, they provide information on the outputs realised in terms of numbers of women reached by training, awareness campaigns and/or community dialogues, numbers of women provided with medical and other care and shelter, etc. In an area like *combating VAW*, there is limited evidence that points at increased knowledge on VAW, on its unacceptability and on how to deal with it. At the same time, it was found that women were often afraid to take action for fear of losing reputation and of community backlash. To date, for many *private sector and infrastructure development programmes*, information on outcomes for final target groups is not available from the evaluations carried out – though there are exceptions. This was also confirmed by IOB's recent policy evaluation on private sector development (IOB, 2014b). Information on outcomes and impact is rare and anecdotal and often based on self-reporting. This finding is irrespective of the channel and the types of instruments used, the interventions implemented, or the themes covered. *Women's education* is an exception, mainly because of the existing research in this domain. For other thematic areas, such research (both academic and grey literature) is not yet capable of filling the observed information caveat: there are still too few evidence-based research findings. Moreover, when available, they are very context specific, therefore difficult to generalise, and, at times, contradictory.

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Insufficient attention paid to gender at the initial phase hinders monitoring and evaluation

The problem of limited insight into results already starts during the intervention design phase. All too often, gender specific indicators that go beyond activity/output level for the final beneficiaries are lacking. Gender-disaggregated monitoring data are not collected in the implementation phase. This state of affairs contributes to a lack of attention to women's rights and gender equality in many evaluations. This also applies for IOB's own evaluations, though there are exceptions (water and sanitation, SRHR, education). At the same time, it is evident that monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems can only capture so much. Generally, evaluations take place right before or just after the implementation of relatively short-term projects, whereas fundamental change in gender inequality takes much longer to materialise.

Sustainability remains an issue

As the evaluation of the MDG3 Fund (IOB, 2015a) shows, it is unlikely that many of the smaller (women's) organisations that have been (co-)financed by the Netherlands will be able to sustain their activities without external support. Both institutional and financial sustainability remain weak, in most cases because of the absence of clear capacity development strategies, the short timeframe available for such capacity development, as well as the persistent difficulties in getting access to money. The area of combating violence against women is a case in point. In many countries, governments are unable and at times also unwilling to live up to their international obligations. In reaction to this, many women's organisations and NGOs have filled the gap in supporting survivors. As the government is not able or willing to support these organisations, they remain dependent on external funding. This hinders their financial sustainability.

Resources and efficiency

Financing of the stand-alone track has increased...

Funding for the stand-alone track of the gender policy is currently accounted for under budget article 3.2 ('Equal rights and opportunities for women') of the budget for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. Budget and expenditures were close to zero by 2006 but received a significant boost following the establishment of the MDG3 Fund in 2008 and its successor FLOW in 2012. In addition, resources were set aside for contributions to UN Women and the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, a series of projects financed under the NAP UNSCR 1325 as well as 'Women in the Frontline'. Against a background of a declining general budget for development cooperation, the expenditures under budget article 3.2 actually increased from EUR 3.9 million in 2007 to EUR 44 million in 2014. However, at the same time less money went to gender projects undertaken at embassy level.

... but funding for gender mainstreaming is impossible to calculate

The OECD/DAC gender marker is expected to be used to calculate the budget spent on gender equality as part of the Ministry's gender mainstreaming policy. This gender marker would theoretically tell what share of the budget is set aside for gender mainstreaming. In practice, however, the gender marker is inconsistently used. This makes it impossible to determine the mainstreaming budget with any certainty.

Assessment of efficiency of gender mainstreaming is impossible, yet assessment of the MDG3 Fund is critical

This evaluation did not look into the efficiency of the Ministry's entire project portfolio into which gender should have been mainstreamed. Yet, efficiency aspects were addressed in the evaluation of the MDG3 Fund (IOB, 2015a) which has accounted for well over 50% of expenditures under budget article 3.2 in the period 2008-2011. Nevertheless, that particular evaluation also encountered problems when trying to compare the financial data of the individual MDG3 Fund grantees: budget and financial reporting formats varied and results-based financial reporting was not required. Main efficiency issues identified in the

evaluation relate to: (i) a lack of a good project design; (ii) a poor balance between input, output and outreach; (iii) budgets that were not well-balanced; and (iv) little or no interaction between different initiatives and organisations operating in the same area. Moreover, overhead costs were considerable. These were partly explained by a preference for multi-country programmes that were centrally managed but lacked the necessary management mechanisms that such programmes require.

Organisational and human resource issues

Regarding organisational and human resources, developments in the Netherlands have been quite similar to those in other (like-minded) donor countries. These have also witnessed problems of limited accountability mechanisms, limited gender expertise in both headquarters and 'the field', unclear organisational positioning of a 'gender unit' and little training on gender-related topics.

Lessons

Moving mainstreaming from rhetoric to reality

The time has come to move beyond rhetoric and to start making gender mainstreaming (as stressed in the Beijing Platform for Action) a reality. This means that gender issues should be included in the design *and* implementation of *all* policies, programmes and projects, and not just in those dealing with women or SRHR. It also means assigning accountability for gender mainstreaming, not only within the Ministry but also at the level of partner organisations, both within and outside the Netherlands. The Netherlands can only be a 'gender champion' when responsibilities are clearly defined.

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It's about women AND men

Multiple gender-related problems at multiple levels call for comprehensive interventions. They also call for collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, including with the other half of the human species in the gender equation: men. Gender equality is not just about women; it is about the power dimensions *between women and men*. These dimensions can differ per culture, thematic area, or social group.

Context matters

Awareness of these context-specific differences is essential and reconfirms the importance of contextualised gender analyses when preparing interventions: there is clearly no 'one size fits all'. Context matters a great deal; what works in one setting for one particular target group can be counterproductive in another.

What gets measured, gets done

There is a need to support the enhancement of quantitative, evidenced-based methods to account for what is happening. At the same time, while in need of further improvement, M&E has its limitations. This underlines the need for investing in (academic) longer-term research collaborations, especially for thematic areas like private sector development and food security, where still (too) little is known about what really works for women *and* men.

It all starts with education

Basic literacy and numeracy skills are essential preconditions for women to participate in economic development, to become aware of and gain access to their rights, and to participate in a meaningful manner in politics. Educating women builds their confidence and allows them (better) to claim their rights, both as girls and as adults. Without education, women cannot empower themselves – the same holds for boys and men.

Build local capacity

Women's organisations, both large and small, still have a role to play. They have good knowledge of local issues and not only play a role in lobby and advocacy, but also fill the gap resulting from the lack of government responsiveness in areas like combating violence against women. Yet, often these organisations face problems of sustainability and require longer-term assistance. Such support should focus more on building their institutional capacities instead of only conceiving them as implementing bodies. At the same time, focusing on traditional 'women's organisations' may not always be the most effective way to address strategic gender concerns. Working with (conservative) men may sometimes be a better way forward.

Strengthen the Ministry's own capacity

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In terms of what organisational structure works best, there are no blueprints for best-fit. The Task Force on Women's Rights and Gender Equality that has been put in place may prove a vital element in implementing the Ministry's gender equality policy in the long-term. Whereas the gender expertise that still exists within the Ministry and the embassies should continue to be used, it should also be strengthened further for making gender mainstreaming a reality.

Be realistic, be patient and stay committed

Finally, change does not appear overnight and increasing gender equality is a long-term and multi-dimensional process that requires persistent commitment. It is at the same time important to realise that a government has quite a limited role in changing the social fabric elsewhere and that addressing the root causes of gender discrimination is clearly fraught with tensions. Even from a theoretical point of view, a government *cannot* empower women: the most it can achieve is support or create the conditions under which women empower themselves. Supporting gender equality therefore requires a firm dose of realism and modesty about what can effectively be accomplished. Setting gender-sensitive objectives in turn requires an intervention logic that is based on sound analysis and that comes with attainable objectives and indicators, which help to measure and assess progress. Finally, realising effective change in the area of women's rights and gender equality requires patience. After all it is a long-term process that takes generations to materialise!

1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Women's rights have had a prominent place on the international agenda for decades. They feature in international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security of 2000. Women's universal human rights were furthermore confirmed in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993). For many years, Dutch foreign and development aid policies have equally stressed the importance of women's rights and gender equality. Nevertheless, the last evaluation of the Dutch support to women's rights and gender equality goes back to 1998 when IOB published its report 'Women and Development – Policy and implementation in Netherlands development cooperation 1985-1996' (see text box 1.1 for a brief overview of its main findings).

For this reason, a policy evaluation on women's rights and gender equality was included in the evaluation programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the period 2010-2015. This report reflects its results.

The remainder of this introduction presents the main concepts used in this evaluation. It provides information on the main research questions, the evaluation scope and research methods used, as well as its limitations.

Text box 1.1 *Main findings from IOB's previous evaluation on women and development (1998)*

- Dutch policies in the area of women's emancipation have been ambitious from the start. Despite differences in wording, in essence they have not changed dramatically over the years. The principle of justice has featured strongly in these policies. Instrumental considerations, and especially the notion of increased aid effectiveness, have played a role as well.
- Since the 1990s, the focus has been on topics like violence against women and women and the macro-economy. Since the Beijing conference of 1995 other themes were included which have been maintained to date: participation in political decision-making, women and armed conflict and inheritance rights. However, these themes received little attention in the bilateral programmes at country level.
- Combining gender mainstreaming with special projects supporting women and women's organisations was the main strategy. The evaluation confirmed the relevance of a separate policy on women and development and of the two-track strategy, observing that women and development had increasingly been incorporated in country and sector documents since the early 1990s. It questioned however whether gender mainstreaming should be part of *all* policies and programmes and called for more strategic choices in this respect.

- The evaluation indicates that from a women's perspective, the relevance of bilateral programmes varied. The assumption that projects in sectors employing women would automatically be relevant for women was unproven. It also found that more attention was paid to gender issues in the stage of programme and project preparation and that this declined during implementation and M&E. This made it difficult to assess the impact on women's empowerment, though it was acknowledged that women's economic and socio-cultural position had seen some change, albeit less so for poorer women.
- In terms of results, the evaluation found that in 1996 more women were involved in Dutch bilateral aid projects than in 1985. These projects especially enabled them to address their basic needs. However, this varied between countries and was affected by prevailing power relations between women and men. The stand-alone track was assessed positively as it had played a role in stimulating the debate on emancipation, developing and distributing information materials and addressing persistent taboos like sexual intimidation of girls at school.
- Overall, the judgement of the sustainability of programme and project results was not favourable, partly because of the use of the project approach, partly because counterpart organisations lacked the necessary policies and human and financial infrastructure.
- On organisational matters, the evaluation underlined the importance of the presence of the gender specialists at the Dutch embassies, gender training that was provided and the presence of a range of special instruments – such as sector papers and gender assessments. At the same time, it questioned the way in which gender expertise was organised in The Hague from 1996 onwards: within the new structure the theme lost its visibility, and limited interaction between the gender unit and other departments in relation to obligatory project advice had disappeared.

1.2 Concepts

Over the years, Dutch international policies on women's rights and gender equality have used a variety of concepts. In some cases different words were used to describe one and the same phenomenon. In others, certain concepts disappeared from the vocabulary while returning at a later stage – an example is the notion of 'empowerment'. The following paragraphs therefore explain the main concepts that will be used throughout this evaluation, i.e. gender, which is not synonymous with 'women', gender equality, gender mainstreaming and empowerment.

Gender refers to culturally-based expectations of the roles, behaviours and responsibilities of women and men and the relations between them. Gender roles are acquired, vary across time, and within and between cultures. They are modified by systems of social differentiation such as political status, class or caste, ethnicity, and age, or other forms of socio-economic

inequality that frequently exacerbate the injustices associated with gender inequality (Kabeer, 2012: 6).³

The concept of *gender equality* refers to the equality in life outcomes for women and men, while recognising their different needs and interests. To realise gender equality in this sense, a treatment of women and men is needed that goes beyond simply increasing the number of women within organisations and/or in decision-making positions as an indicator of progress towards gender equality (Mukhopadhyay, 2004: 98-99).

The concept of *gender mainstreaming* refers to ‘the reorganisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making’ (Council of Europe, 1998: 15). It is about incorporating a gender equality perspective in strategies and policies, in the different phases of the management cycle of projects and programmes – from identification to implementation and evaluation – as well as in the organisation’s systems and structures to avoid that they reproduce gender inequality.⁴

Empowerment is a process ‘by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices, acquire such ability’, and that should lead to broader outcomes at the level of the individual and the collective.⁵ Empowerment cannot be bestowed by a third party – like development agencies – ‘the most they can achieve is to facilitate women empowering themselves’ by creating conditions that are favourable to empowerment (Mosedale, 2005: 244).⁶ Empowerment requires attention to access to *resources* (material, human or social), the rules, norms, beliefs and practices that influence this access, and *agency*, which is essentially women’s capacity to take advantage of these resources by making strategic choices, i.e. choices that ‘are critical for people to live the lives they want (such as choice of livelihood, whether and who to marry, whether to have children etc.)’ (Kabeer, 1999: 437). The notion of empowerment is further dissected into three main aspects of power⁷:

- *Power to* – which is about women’s access to crucial resources such as income, land and other means of production, as well as knowledge and skills;
- *Power within* – which is about how women view themselves and aspects such as self-esteem and self-confidence;
- *Power with* – which is about women’s actual ability to use these resources (agency) and to take decisions, bear responsibility, and to organise themselves to influence decision-making.

³ While the Dutch emancipation policy focuses on the rights of women and those of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people (GLBT), this policy evaluation only deals with gender as described in this paragraph.

⁴ See e.g. Verloo, 2001: 13; Moser, 2005: 577 and Roggeband, 2009.

⁵ See Kabeer, 1999: 437; Kabeer, 2005: 13, 16; Kabeer, 2010: 106; Smyth, 2007: 584.

⁶ The literature demonstrates that this may put a development agency in a difficult position: ‘on the one hand, it must challenge the disempowered to change their values and behaviour; on the other hand, it should not be perceived as imposing its own values and the potential for disempowerment that this brings’ (Luttrell et al., 2009: 13).

⁷ For a more detailed explanation please refer to IOB, 2015a: 21.

1.3 Goals of the policy evaluation and main research questions

This policy evaluation was undertaken to assess the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency of the way in which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has implemented its international gender policy between 2007 and 2014. Another aim was to generate lessons for future policy making in this domain.

In line with the requirements of a policy evaluation as stipulated in the Order on Periodic Evaluation and Policy Information of the Ministry of Finance (RPE 2012), the following evaluation questions were formulated (see Annex 2 for a summary of the Terms of Reference)⁸:

- 1) What has motivated the Dutch Government to assume an active international role in addressing gender issues?
- 2) What have been the objectives and main characteristics of the Ministry's overall international gender equality policy and the strategies used to realise these objectives and what are the links with the Netherlands' national emancipation policy⁹?
- 3) Based on this international gender policy, has gender equality been incorporated into country and thematic policies and into concrete interventions and gender-equality focused approaches and is this evident in the different stages of the policy/programme cycle?
- 4) What were the results of these interventions in terms of providing better conditions for women and have these results been sustainable? ¹⁰
- 5) What were the financial and institutional resources to implement the Ministry's gender equality policy and were these used efficiently?

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1.4 Scope, methods and limitations

1.4.1 Scope

To ensure closer links with current policy thinking, this evaluation covered the period 2007-2014. It deals with budget line 3.2 of the budget for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (*Equal rights and opportunities for women*).¹¹ In line with the Ministry's gender mainstreaming policy, information in relation to other budget lines is presented as well. With its attention to women's rights as human rights, the evaluation also covers part of the budget for Foreign Affairs.¹²

⁸ The full terms of reference can be found at <http://www.iob-evaluatie.nl/gender>.

⁹ The three overall emancipation policy documents prepared during the evaluation period are discussed in chapter 2.

¹⁰ The evaluation has looked at results in terms of output and, whenever possible, of outcome.

¹¹ Until 2012, this was budget line 5.3 of the joint budget for Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation.

¹² On financing in relation to gender mainstreaming see section 3.5 of this report.

The evaluation focuses on the policy themes in which women's rights and gender issues had a central place in Dutch foreign policy and development cooperation, for at least part of the period 2007-2014. These themes are combating violence against women (VAW)¹³; women and education; women's political participation; women and water and sanitation; women's economic development; and women and peace and security. While it is realised that women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are an essential condition that needs to be fulfilled *before* women can make use of their other human rights, these are not addressed in this evaluation. The main reason is that SRHR is amply covered by IOB's recent policy evaluation on SRHR (IOB, 2013a; see further section 1.4.3). Whenever possible, this evaluation is based on existing evaluation material.

The research methods used for the different themes of this evaluation are described in the following paragraphs.

The theme of *combating violence against women* was researched through an assessment of:

- the results of selected bilateral projects and of projects financed under the MDG3 Fund in Dutch partner countries Bangladesh and Mozambique;
- the diplomatic efforts of the Netherlands at key UN bodies, including the Dutch interventions and recommendations made during the Universal Periodic Reviews that are held under the aegis of the Human Rights Council;
- the results reported by IOB on women's rights projects financed under the Netherlands Human Rights Fund and the results of the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women as reported by UN Women's Independent Evaluation Office; and
- the results reported by Dutch NGOs on the basis of existing evaluation material of sufficient quality.¹⁴

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Findings with respect to gender in the areas of *water and sanitation* and *education* are based on recent IOB policy evaluations and country-level evaluations done in Egypt, Benin, Mozambique, and Yemen (water and sanitation) and Bangladesh, Bolivia, Uganda, and Zambia (education).

With respect to *gender and economic development*, our starting point was the observation in IOB's policy evaluation (2014b) of private sector development that, with few exceptions, evaluations of Dutch (co) financed private sector development programmes did not report on outcomes for final target groups or dealt with issues like income improvement, poverty alleviation and economic growth (IOB, 2014b: 16-17). Against this background, evaluations and other documentation were studied on what they had to say about the attention to women and gender. The selection is based on the size of the programmes and the availability

¹³ The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), talks about gender-based violence which is 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life'. Gender-based violence is often synonymous for violence against women (VAW) which is the term used in this report.

¹⁴ To assess quality, a checklist was used, based on the assessment criteria in as used in IOB, 2011h.

of evaluation reports. Account was also taken of advice given by Ministry staff. The selection made covers the following clusters and programmes:

Infrastructure	Development-Related Export Transactions (ORET) and the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Infrastructure Development Fund
Financial services	Micro & Small Enterprise Fund; Health Insurance Fund; and a recent public partnership with Rabo Development
Knowledge and skills development	Programme for Cooperation with Emerging Markets (PSOM) and Private Sector Investment Programme (PSI); and PUM
Market skills and value chain development	Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH); Farmer Support Programme (Solidaridad) and value chain development by SNV in Ethiopia and Tanzania

The evaluation also looked at programmes involving Dutch trade unions and initiatives under the MDG3 Fund with organisations that are rooted in the international labour movement.

In the area of *food security* – for which an IOB impact evaluation is scheduled in 2016 – the evaluation looked into two areas: women’s access to land and women’s participation in producer organisations. Land rights were identified because of the clear gender focus of the Dutch policies in this domain since 2007. The Support for Producer Organisations programme was taken on board because of the attention paid to women’s participation in the farmer organisations involved. On land rights, the evaluation looked into two multilateral programmes co-financed by the Netherlands (International Land Coalition and the Global Land Tool Network) and bilateral land programmes in Burundi and Rwanda. In Mozambique, both bilateral projects and a project financed under the MDG3 Fund were included.

The theme of *women’s political participation* is based on an assessment of:

- a project of UN Women co-financed by the Netherlands in Egypt;
- projects financed under the MDG3 Fund projects in Egypt and Mozambique;
- projects funded under the second National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 in Burundi and the DRC; and
- results reflected in reports and evaluations on projects implemented in collaboration with the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD).

Political participation was one of the MDG3 Fund’s priorities. For the MDG3 Fund evaluation, Egypt and Mozambique, where projects in this area were implemented, were selected as case countries to be visited. Primarily for logistical reasons, the project of UN Women in Egypt was taken on board as well. In case of the National Action Plan to implement UNSCR 1325 for which political participation was a priority from 2012 onwards, Burundi and DRC feature among the countries in which projects in this priority area were under implementation. NIMD was identified given the resources set aside for the Institute and the availability of evaluation material.

In the area of *women, peace and security*, the evaluation has zoomed in on the two Dutch National Action Plans (NAP) to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the issue of gender mainstreaming in the Netherlands peace and security programmes, i.e. the Stability Fund and the Reconstruction Fund (IOB, 2015b). Geographically, the focus was on Afghanistan, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These countries were identified for the following reasons: (i) they are among the focus countries of the NAPs since 2010, (ii) they are among the top five recipients of the Stability Fund and the Reconstruction Fund, which were identified as the Ministry's prime financial instruments for gender mainstreaming in peace and security, and (iii) already before the adoption of the first NAP, projects financed in these countries were mentioned as examples of how UNSCR 1325 was progressively implemented. In addition, the evaluation draws on evaluations and reviews done with respect to the UN Peacebuilding Fund.

1.4.2 Methods

The evaluation has used three basic research methods: desk research, interviews and field visits. Different sources were triangulated as much as possible to get an objective picture.¹⁵

Desk research first of all concerned a broad range of documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This included general and sector or theme specific policy documents, letters and other information flows to Parliament, financial data and annual plans and reports of Ministry departments and embassies. Relevant project and programme documentation was used as well. Secondly, for information on results, *existing* independent evaluations were used that IOB considered of acceptable quality. These included evaluation reports by IOB, by multilateral institutions (e.g. World Bank, UN Women, FAO, and UNDP), by Dutch civil society interventions, and by organisations in charge of the centralised economic development programmes. Thirdly, ample use was made of academic and other literature. This included records of UN meetings, UN documents on e.g. violence against women and human rights, academic and 'grey' literature on gender in general and gender in relation to the evaluation themes, as well as evaluations conducted by other countries, relevant websites and databases. Academic and grey literature particularly served to: (a) answer the question on the evidence base of policies pursued; (b) obtain information on potential impact of interventions; and (c) obtain a broader perspective on key elements of the Dutch gender equality policy.¹⁶

Semi-structured interviews were held with staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch and international NGOs, organisations contracted to manage centrally financed programmes and external experts.

Short visits were undertaken to Bangladesh, Burundi, Egypt and Mozambique. These countries were selected for the following reasons: (i) a comparatively substantial level of bilateral funding for women's organisations; (ii) implementation of projects in the areas of

¹⁵ Annex 4 contains the persons consulted, including those interviewed during the field visits. Annex 3 provides an overview of the literature used.

¹⁶ The results of this review of academic and grey literature are incorporated in the separately published literature study 'Premises and promises' (IOB, 2015c).

land rights, violence against women and/or political participation; and (iii) presence of both bilateral and MDG3 Fund financed projects. The visits served to collect and triangulate information on topics like cooperation; actual results and beneficiaries, and, where available, outcomes. During the visits, interviews were conducted with *inter alia* staff of the Netherlands embassies, representatives of organisations that had received Dutch funding, government bodies, plus embassies of other countries. Focus group sessions and timeline exercises were held, where possible, with beneficiaries of Dutch supported interventions.

Table 1.1 provides an overview of the methods used with respect to the different themes.

Table 1.1 Methods used for the gender policy evaluation by theme						
Methods used for the gender policy evaluation by theme						
	Desk study				Inter-views	Field visits
	Policy documents	Programme / project documents	Existing evaluation material	Academic and grey literature		
Overall policy reconstruction						
Human rights and VAW						
Education						
Economic empowerment						
Food security						
Water and sanitation						
Women and politics						
Women, peace and security						

Two separate evaluation studies were conducted on the MDG3 Fund and the Dutch National Action Plans to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325. The related reports are published separately but were extensively used in preparing this policy evaluation report. The evaluation of the MDG3 Fund generated information in relation to *several* of the above-mentioned themes. Relevant findings are incorporated in the different thematic chapters. The evaluation of the NAPs not only provided information on the evolution of the Action Plans but also on the issue of gender mainstreaming in Dutch security policy and Dutch supported interventions in Afghanistan, Burundi and DRC. The report was the basis for the chapter on women, peace and security in this report.

1.4.3 Limitations

As mentioned, the evaluation relied as much as possible on existing evaluation materials. This has neither always been easy nor always possible. While for many years Dutch policies have been characterised by attention to gender mainstreaming, evaluations often failed to pay attention to how this has worked out in practice. This also applies to many of IOB’s own evaluations. Moreover, gender-disaggregated data were generally not collected, an

exception being the areas of education and water and sanitation. Consequently, it was often not clear whether women were involved or benefited, what, if any, these benefits and outcomes were, not to mention what impact was generated. Another problem was that outcomes and impact may only appear some time after the (often short-term) interventions were completed. If available, measurement at outcome or impact level was moreover often based on self-reporting – with little if any cross referencing. The use of other evaluations and/or academic and grey literature as well as field work could fill this caveat only to a limited extent.

As mentioned above, the evaluation focused on a selection of key themes in which gender equality and women's rights were identified as a key issue. The need to be selective was reinforced by the resources available. Apart from SRHR, three main areas were not covered for the following reasons. While attention to gender in the area of humanitarian assistance is crucial, as is also underlined in UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), a policy evaluation on this topic is on-going. Renewable energy, a Dutch aid priority in the early years of the evaluation period, has remained outside the scope of the evaluation for similar reasons, even though the close link between the availability of energy and the welfare of women and girls is acknowledged. Finally, the evaluation does not deal with gender and what was once a new aid modality: budget support. The reason is that this aid modality has no place in Dutch development cooperation since 2010.

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It has not been possible to get a coherent and objective picture of the funding allocated to promoting gender equality, apart from the budgets for the stand-alone track as reflected by budget article 3.2. This reflects an international tendency with respect to the so-called gender marker. This was introduced under the umbrella of OECD/DAC to allow the donor community to track how much money it was planning to allocate to support gender equality and women's empowerment under the heading of 'gender mainstreaming'. However, use and usefulness of the gender marking and related reporting have their limitations, as was already noted in IOB's evaluation report on Women and Development of 1998. More recently, a review of the African Development Bank observed that 'tracking of gender financing has been weak' and that it was not possible for all evaluations to get a clear picture of administrative or intervention-level budget commitment of their organisation (AfDB, 2012: 53).¹⁷ Financial data in this evaluation report are therefore limited to the stand-alone track.

Given these evaluation limitations, a decision was made to address this issue only in relation to the MDG3 Fund which accounted for some 51% of the Ministry's expenditures under budget line 3.2 in the period 2008-2011. Findings are reported in IOB's evaluation of the MDG3 Fund (IOB, 2015b: 99-107) and summarised in chapter 3.

¹⁷ See also e.g. Pinder, 2005: 25; Aasen, 2006: 4; Walters, 2006: 19; OECD/DAC, 2007: 33; Nanivazo and Scott, 2012: 15; and Eerdewijk en Dubel, 2012: 495.

1.5 Structure of the report

Following this introductory chapter, chapter 2 explains the main features of the overall Dutch gender policy of the period 2007-2014. Chapter 3 then assesses the organisational aspects by looking at how gender equality and women's rights have been dealt with within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – with particular attention to how gender mainstreaming was handled in the programme cycle.

The remainder of the report is structured along the priority themes mentioned above: violence against women (chapter 4), education (chapter 5), economic development (chapter 6), food security (chapter 7), water and sanitation (chapter 8), political participation and leadership (chapter 9) and peace and security (chapter 10). Each chapter includes a brief on the main findings from the literature study and a presentation of the main features of specific Dutch gender policies on these themes. This is followed by information on what is known of the results accomplished.

The annexes to the report include a summary of the terms of reference (Annex 2), the literature used (Annex 3), the interviewees consulted (Annex 4), plus a brief historical overview of Dutch international gender policies (Annex 5).

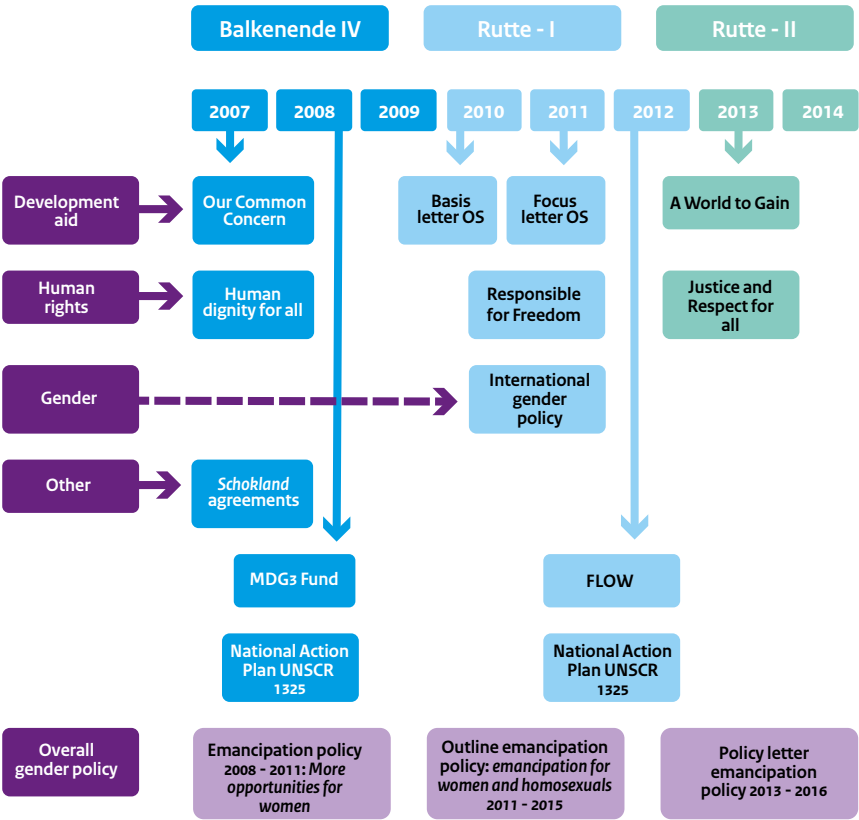
2

Gender equality and women's rights in Dutch foreign policies

2.1 Introduction

The evaluation focuses on the period 2007-2014. It covers three different cabinets, which in The Netherlands are commonly referred to using the name of the Prime Minister and the number of his/her subsequent cabinets in office: Balkenende IV (2007-2010), Rutte I (2010-2012) and Rutte II (2012-present). Figure 2.1 gives an overview of the main policy documents prepared and the key initiatives that were taken in relation to women's rights and gender equality.

Figure 2.1 *Cabinets and policy documents (2007-2014)*



When the Balkenende IV government came into office in February 2007, the state of affairs with respect to gender equality and women's rights in Dutch foreign and development policy was as follows.¹⁸ Overall, attention to women's rights and gender equality had seen a decline in previous years. The policy note 'Mutual Interests Mutual Benefits' of 2003 did not refer to these topics at all. The traditional two-track policy of simultaneously mainstreaming gender and a stand-alone track in support of women's rights and organisations had been abandoned. Instead, the focus was exclusively on gender mainstreaming, which was often equated with getting more women on board of organisations, increasing the number of women benefiting from aid and, in particular, having more women operate in the political arena. The separate budget for 'women' had been abolished. Moreover, a decision had been made to no longer replace the Dutch gender experts in the Netherlands embassies in the Dutch aid partner countries. On the other hand, women's rights continued to be seen as a human rights issue, with a focus on combating violence against women. Women were also the main target group of Dutch support in the field of SRHR.

Against this background, this chapter provides a reconstruction of the Government's overall international policy on women's rights and gender equality in the years 2007-2014. It focuses on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the Ministry responsible for implementing major part of this policy (see e.g. KST 136350-09, 2009). It also provides information on the basic characteristics of the different overall emancipation policies mentioned in the figure above.

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2.2 2007-2010: Balkenende IV

Attention to the position of women regained importance with the new Balkenende IV Government and is reflected in the policy note 'Our Common Concern' of October 2007 (KST 111245, 2007) that appeared one month after the Government's overall emancipation policy for the years 2008-2011 '*Meer kansen voor vrouwen*' (More opportunities for women (KST 110541, 2007); see text box 2.1).

¹⁸ For a brief history of earlier Dutch policies on women's rights and gender equality, see Annex 5.

Text box 2.1 *The overall emancipation policy note 'More opportunities for women'*

In the policy note 'More opportunities for women', the Government observed that despite progress in the field of women's emancipation, there remained a gap between the ideal of equal rights for women and men and realities in society: emancipation was stagnating. Government priorities were women on the labour market, women from ethnic communities, sexual violence as well as more opportunities for women in developing countries. The overall aim of the Dutch international emancipation policy was to contribute to eliminating all forms of discrimination of women and promoting their position worldwide in a structural manner. This translated into four policy objectives: (i) structural attention to the position of women in developing countries; (ii) improving SRHR; (iii) systematic attention to the effects of international peace keeping missions for women and, where needed, for the composition of the entity to be deployed. A link is also made to UNSCR 1325 (2000); and (iv) structural attention to the position of women in all international dossiers.

CEDAW, Beijing, UNSCR 1325, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the ICPD programme of Action of 1994 were among the policy's main corner stones. National themes such as women's employment (and decent work) and participation came back onto the international agenda. The focus was on achieving better results, improved policy implementation and better cooperation and synergy with other stakeholders. Women and girls in conflict situations, women and girls in the Middle East and the Gulf Region, and marginalised women and adolescents featured as the main target groups. Women's rights and opportunities would get more attention as one of the priorities of the Dutch human rights policy. The document also emphasised the importance of the interaction between national and international emancipation policies¹⁹ and identified this as an area where substantial gains could still be made.

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Policy wise, the so-called *Schokland akkoorden* gave important inputs to the development policy note 'Our Common Concern'.²⁰ These agreements were also the basis for the Dutch National Action Plan (NAP) to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security (explained in chapter 10), the MDG3 Fund (see text box 2.2) and initiatives aimed at combating violence against women.

¹⁹ On the link between international agreements and Dutch national emancipation policies see also the mid-term review of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of November 2014 (Directie Emancipatie, Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2014: 12).

²⁰ Tackling the backlog in realising the MDGs was not only a matter for the Government: Dutch society as a whole needed to be involved. To that effect, members of Government, companies, organisations, institutions, and private citizens signed the so-called *Akkoord van Schokland* in June 2007 as part of the Government's 'Project 2015'. In the end, 54 'millennium agreements' (especially public-private partnerships) were signed and financed from a EUR 50 million *Schoklandfonds* for the period 2008-2011. On the *Schokland akkoorden* see further Aidenvironment, 2009; and Aidenvironment, 2010.

The policy note expressed the ambition that within four years, the Netherlands was to be effective, innovative and inspiring in its efforts to improve the rights and opportunities of women worldwide (KST 111961, 2007: 2). It stressed that fighting poverty was 'everyone's business'. As part of a more coherent foreign policy, development cooperation needed to become more political, with more attention for human rights, especially those of women, and should adopt a comprehensive approach to address conflicts (KST 111245, 2007: 4).²¹ The Government's policy combined rights-based aspects – reflected in the Dutch human rights policy, finding its origins in e.g. CEDAW, specific resolutions adopted at the UN General Assembly, Beijing 1995 and Cairo 1994 – and instrumentalist aspects. It also argued that addressing women's needs and rights would enhance the effectiveness and quality of Dutch aid efforts (KST 111961, 2007: 2).²²

Several arguments were put forward explaining that attention to women moved higher up on the Dutch agenda, confirming what was also mentioned in the Dutch overall emancipation policy:

- Women's position required special attention because of the lack of progress on the MDGs 3, 4 and 5²³ and because of declining international budgets for the 'gender agenda' in previous years. It was argued that without substantial improvement in the position of women, neither MDG3 nor other MDGs would be achieved (KST 111961, 2007: 4).²⁴
- The effectiveness and quality of the Dutch aid effort would improve if policies and financial allocations would consider the different position and roles of men and women in society (KST 111961, 2007: 2). Additional efforts were needed for effective gender mainstreaming in all aspects of Dutch foreign policy. This had never before been done systematically. At the same time, it was realised that mainstreaming gender alone did not seem to work, as it had turned too much into a goal in itself and had only been partially successful in areas like education and health.²⁵
- The Dutch contribution to MDG3 called for an effort that went beyond aid and included political dialogue and diplomacy (Project 2015, 2007: 61, 139).

²¹ At the same time, it was realised that addressing women's rights was not going to be an easy task, because of (i) the deep-rooted social and cultural causes of gender inequality, and (ii) because gender equality had low priority with the governments of many developing countries (KST 111245, 2007: 27).

²² Similar observations are made in the Dutch national emancipation policy of this period. Women's participation in the labour market is seen as a way to compensate for an ageing population, for strengthening the Dutch international economic competitiveness, for maintaining the financial basis of the welfare state and for increasing diversity on the working floor (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2007: 59, 69; KST 130435, 2009: 2). They also feature in more recent emancipation policy documents (KST 30420-180, 2013: 5 and Auditdienst Rijk, 2014).

²³ According to the policy note, little progress was partly caused by the poor quality of governance systems, especially in fragile states: the poor in general and women in particular lacked the means to inform and organise themselves to be able to influence the distribution of economic growth and wealth and public service delivery by the government.

²⁴ See KST 111961, 2007: 4; KST 128944, 2009: 21, 61; KST 132821B, 2009: 48 and KST 32500-V-2, 2010: 19.

²⁵ KST 111245, 2007: 28 and KST 111961, 2007: 3.

The importance of paying attention to equal rights of women and men beyond the Dutch borders was also explained in the 2007 letter of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, who is responsible for domestic emancipation matters. It observed that while the Netherlands had made progress in this area, in many countries emancipation had stagnated. The rights of girls and women continued to be violated and the right to education and SRHR remained ill-protected. Especially since fundamentalist and orthodox religious opposition was on the rise, Dutch efforts to improve the position of the world's girls and women remained necessary (KST 110541, 2007: 5).²⁶

Thematically, the following priorities were identified in the policy note 'Our Common Concern': post-primary education for girls, SRHR, time-saving infrastructure for women, property and inheritance rights for women, formal employment for women and equal opportunities on the labour market, participation and representation of women in politics and government and combating violence against women.²⁷ The idea was that interventions in these areas would lead to institutional and cultural changes and changes in women's individual capacities (KST 131975, 2009: 3).

In the area of peace and security, specific reference was made to support the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325. Favouring an integrated approach, the Government promised increased recognition of and support for women as 'silent victims' and as key actors in situations of war and conflict and for improving the position of women in fragile states on the basis of a National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of this Resolution. This Action Plan was finalised in December 2007 (see chapter 10 of this report and the separate evaluation report (IOB, 2015b)).

The Government returned to the two-track approach of gender mainstreaming and stand-alone resources for women's organisations by creating the MDG3 Fund (see text box 2.2 and the separate evaluation report on the Fund (IOB, 2015a)). More money would also be available for gender equality through *inter alia* the Human Rights Fund, the Stability Fund and Dutch bilateral aid.²⁸

²⁶ Similar observations, also in relation to LGBTs, are made in the more recent policy note on emancipation (KST 30420 -180, 2013: 9, 26).

²⁷ KST 108425B, 2007: 97; KST 132821B, 2009: 112. The Netherlands found the objectives and indicators that were agreed upon with the MDGs a too restricted interpretation of gender equality and women's empowerment (Project 2015, 2007: 59-60).

²⁸ The decision to increase funding for gender equality was fuelled by e.g. the AWID studies 'Where Is The Money For Women's Rights?' (Clark et al., 2006) and 'The Second Fundher Report: Financial Sustainability for Women's Movements Worldwide' (Kerr, 2007).

Text box 2.2 *Basics of the MDG3 Fund*

The MDG3 Fund was established on 28 February 2008 as a temporary facility to boost the level of MDG3-related activities. Its main aim was to support activities that would result in concrete improvements in rights and opportunities for women and girls in developing countries. It focused on the following areas: (i) property and inheritance rights for women; (ii) gender equality in employment and equal opportunities on the labour market; (iii) participation and representation of women in national parliaments and political bodies; and (iv) combating violence against women. Priority target groups were women and girls in situations of conflict, marginalised women and adolescents. The Fund was launched in March 2008 with an international call for applications, with 454 applications coming in for appraisal and assessment. In the end, 45 projects were selected for funding and contracts were signed by October 2008. In terms of funding, the original budget of EUR 50 million that was set aside for the period 2008-2011 was increased to EUR 70 million in 2008 and to EUR 77 million by late 2010. The Ministry contracted management of the MDG3 Fund to the consortium of PwC and Femconsult.

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A strong stance was also taken in the 2007 Dutch human rights policy '*Human Dignity for All*'. It was considered unacceptable that people were discriminated because of their gender (KST 111245, 2007: 4, 26). This reflected the Netherlands' national and international commitments and fitted well within a tradition going back to the 1990s to give priority to equal rights for women and men.²⁹ The universal rights of men and women were seen as an area in which Dutch involvement was needed and where it could make a difference.³⁰ Key elements of the Dutch position were³¹:

- The rights of women and girls are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights: *women's rights are human rights*.³²

²⁹ See also KST 108425B, 2007: 95.

³⁰ See e.g. KST 108425B, 2007: 31; KST 132821B, 2009: 48; KST 32500-V-2, 2010: 19; KST 33000-V-2, 2011: 33; KST 33400-V-2, 2012: 18; KST 33400-V-11, 2012: 56; and KST 33401-2, 2013: 11.

³¹ The priority themes of the Dutch human rights policy were seen as relevant for achieving the MDGs and the priority theme of women's rights had a direct link with MDG realisation (KST 116980, 2008: 136).

³² According to the Netherlands, its position was confirmed by: (i) Article 55 of the UN Charter of 1945; and (ii) Article 18 of the Vienna Declaration adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights of 1993 (KST 44822, 1999: 39). This position was maintained throughout the years, see e.g. IOB, 2012a: 27.

- Given the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, these human rights, including women's rights, are universal and apply always and for everyone.³³ Cultural and religious traditions and diversity are not an excuse not to respect them (KST 11818, 2007: 31, 39; KST 136321, 2009: 50).
- Economic, social and cultural rights are 'just as essential to human dignity as civil and political rights' and both are needed for free individual self-development.³⁴

As an 'honest broker' and without a hidden agenda plus a good international reputation in the area of women's rights, the Dutch Government wanted to make an additional effort in three main areas:

- advocating the universality of human rights, with special attention to women's rights³⁵;
- human rights and security; and
- human rights and development, making respect for women's rights one of the criteria for establishing a bilateral aid relation and incorporating, where needed, special attention to women's rights in the bilateral political dialogue (KST 108425B, 2007: 31).³⁶

Political attention to address women's discrimination and VAW – i.e. from female genital mutilation and honour killings to domestic violence – remained necessary. As further explained in chapter 4, in its bilateral aid partner countries, the Netherlands, together with national and international women's organisations would make an effort to include violence against women in the political dialogue and support government agencies and civil society in e.g. undertaking awareness campaigns, care for victims and tackling impunity (KST 111245, 2007: 28). The Netherlands would be more active using funding and 'active diplomacy'³⁷ – i.e. by deploying of its human rights ambassador, supporting and by lobbying for resolutions on violence against women during meetings of the UN General Assembly and associated committees, the Human Rights Council as well as other UN bodies, and as part of the Dutch European agenda.

³³ See e.g. KST 11818, 2007: vi; KST 132821B, 2009: 48; RES 2275, 2009: 59. The Government followed the advice of the Dutch Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV). The universality of human rights was subject of AIV advice in 1998 and 2008 and both times its position was that *all* human rights were 'indivisible, mutually dependent and mutually related' (AIV, 2008: 15). Also with respect to women's rights, existing international legislation obliges states to do away with discriminatory legislation and practices (AIV, 1998: 23). Accepting women's discrimination – by referring to cultural or religious traditions, as was done by some states in making reservations regarding certain CEDAW provisions – was paying a too high price for cultural relativism (AIV, 1998: 11; AIV, 2008: 15).

³⁴ Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2010: 109.

³⁵ The aspect of universality is underscored in a letter of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the chair of the AIV of 24 March 2009 reacting on its advice 'Universality of human rights'. This position is maintained in the current Government's emancipation policy note of 2013, e.g. in relation to VAW and child marriages (KST 30420-180, 2013: 27-28).

³⁶ KST 108425B, 2007: 28; KST 119600B, 2008: 28. This was also mentioned in earlier years as is clear from KST 63939, 2002: 46; and KST 88428_2, 2005: 55.

³⁷ Similar statements were made in KST 111818, 2007: 6, 41 and KST 128326, 2009: 18.

A mid-term evaluation of the international emancipation policy was to be conducted in 2010 as part of an overall review of the Dutch emancipation policy. Its findings would constitute the basis for policy efforts in the years to come (KST 32710-V-1, 2011: 44). The review was, however, never completed: the Balkenende IV cabinet resigned over differences whether to continue the Dutch military mission in Afghanistan. In June 2010 new elections were held and the new Rutte I cabinet came into office in October 2010.

2.3 2010-2012: Rutte I

In the Government's first development aid policy note of November 2010 (KST 32500-V-15, 2010), gender was once more described as a 'cross cutting theme' to be pursued in relations with Dutch bilateral aid partner countries and in the priority areas ('spearheads') of security and rule of law, food security, SRHR, and water. In addition, the Government announced that Dutch aid would go down from 0.8% to 0.7% of GNP, with cumulative cuts in aid amounting to EUR 2.77 billion in the period 2011-2014. These cuts were amongst others to be realised by limiting the number of aid partner countries and reducing funding for Dutch civil society organisations. Education lost its traditional priority status. Dutch international presence would be reduced and embassies closed. Dutch companies would participate more in aid delivery, signalling an emphasis on serving Dutch interests.

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The succeeding policy note '*Focusbriefontwikkelingssamenwerking*' of March 2011 (KST 32605-2, 2011) confirmed these choices by announcing a reduction in the number of bilateral partner countries from 33 to 15. In setting these priorities, the Government had been guided by a report from the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR, 2010). Although this report was somewhat inconclusive on what to do with 'gender' in Dutch foreign policies, gender was maintained as a cross cutting theme (KST 32605-2, 2011: 4, 14) with special reference to the position of women in (post) conflict situations and with UNSCR 1325 to guide concrete activities in this domain.³⁸

In the Parliamentary discussions on the policy document in June 2011, the state secretary of Foreign Affairs agreed to prepare an overall gender policy. This key document, the first of its kind for many years, was presented to Parliament in November 2011; it reflected the previous position on women and development that had been sent to Parliament in September together with the budget for 2012.³⁹

³⁸ The development of a second National Action plan to implement UNSCR 1325 was announced as well.

³⁹ According to the document, the Netherlands would work at both country and international levels, where it aimed to come to better international standards to promote equal rights and opportunities and better compliance with these standards. Support was announced for women's participation in politics and management – as this would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of policy and was a pre-condition for economic development – democratisation, good governance, peace, security and stability plus SRHR (KST 33000-V-2, 2011: 11, 19, 61-62).

Unlike the Government's overall emancipation policy, which was in the first place about LGBTs and, to a lesser extent, about women (see text box 2.3), the policy note on gender focused on gender equality and women's emancipation.

Text box 2.3 *Main features of the emancipation policy note 2011-2015*

In April 2011, the Government presented the main outlines of its emancipation policy for 2011-2015 (KST 27017-71, 2014: *Hoofdlijnen emancipatiebeleid: vrouwen- en homo-emancipatie 2011-2015*). Emancipation was seen as offering people an opportunity to make the best out of their life and to make choices in freedom and security. It argued that emancipation was primarily a responsibility of people, companies and social institutions themselves. Government had a role when security and participation lagged behind. The focus was on women's protection and safety and preventing and combating (domestic and honour related) violence, women's participation in the labour force and entering top functions. For further economic growth it was seen as essential to make use of women's talents, certainly when taking account of existing labour market shortages and the ageing population (KST 27017-71, 2014: 10). The policy note's international paragraph had more to say about LGBT than about women. On women, it underlined that the Netherlands would remain actively involved in efforts to improve the position of women and girls throughout the world, with special attention to SRHR, security, water and energy.

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Arguing the importance of 'gender equality and women's emancipation' from different angles (human rights, economic growth, welfare and security), the international gender policy document confirmed the two-track policy of the past 'with each track reinforcing the other', i.e.: (i) an independent, overarching international gender policy, and (ii) the systematic integration of gender issues in the three pillars of foreign policy and in the four spearheads of development cooperation.⁴⁰ Like Our Common Concern of 2007, it discusses gender equality, women's rights, women's emancipation, and improving the position of women, but the concept of empowerment is not used.⁴¹ Like the policy note *Human Dignity for All* of the previous Government, it combines instrumentalist arguments with a rights-based approach, without, however, a clear intervention logic.

The international gender policy focuses on four priorities that are linked to one or several of the above-mentioned four spearheads, i.e.:

⁴⁰ See also KST 33400-V-11, 2012: 115.

⁴¹ One reason for this may be that the internationally frequently used English word 'empowerment' is difficult to translate into Dutch. In earlier documents, empowerment was given meanings like 'increasing women's voice' (KST 88428_2, 2005: 68-69), or increased 'attention to the position of women' (KST 119600B, 2008: 95; KST 132821B, 2009: 112).

- *Leadership and political empowerment* for women, with the aim to increase women's participation in the political and social processes of change, increase female leadership in the Arab region and in the 15 Dutch aid partner countries.
- *Following up on UN Security Council resolution 1325*, thereby increasing stability in the six focus countries of the Dutch NAP as well as the MENA region by making sure that women 'play a bigger role in peace and democratisation processes'.
- *Economic self-reliance* for women in order to '(increase) women's economic power and strengthen the role women play in making decisions on economic issues'.
- *Combating trafficking in and violence against women* and eliminating 'damaging practices worldwide'.

In relation to the mainstreaming track, the policy document refers to integrating gender issues into the four spearheads of Dutch aid, i.e.:

- *Security and the rule of law* – focusing on continued efforts to apply a gender responsive 3-D approach, a stronger position for women in reconstruction and peace processes, improved legal equality and access to the formal or informal legal order, better access to safe schooling, for girls in particular, and humanitarian aid that addresses the specific needs of women and girls;
- *Food security and water and climate* – with the aim of increasing production, income and food security for women, women's participation in decision-making on water management, and improved access to energy, drinking water and sanitation; and
- *SRHR* – with the Netherlands as '(a) pioneer in combating discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation and gender identity' and '(protecting), promoting and realising SRHR for men and women, heterosexuals and LGBTs, young and old'.

In line with the above, references to women are included in the Government's policy on food security of October 2011 (KST 32605-54, 2011). They are also quite prominent in the letter on the spearhead of security and rule of law of May 2012 (KST 32605-94, 2011). They are nevertheless absent from the policy letter on private sector development in developing countries of November 2011.

A decision was furthermore made in 2011 to continue the MDG3 Fund initiative for the period January 2012-December 2015 under the programme 'Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women' (FLOW) (see text box 2.4). The objective of this programme is 'to contribute to structural poverty reduction by improving gender equality and the empowerment of women. Women and girls around the world must be given equal rights and opportunities'.

Text box 2.4 FLOW

Like the MDG3 Fund, FLOW provides grants for civil initiatives of NGOs and other women's organisations in the areas of security, economic empowerment (with an emphasis on food security, land, water and economic rights) and political participation. FLOW's aim is to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as a building block for structural poverty reduction. FLOW is also linked to efforts to follow-up on the objectives of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (KST 33000-V-10, 2011). The initial budget of EUR 70 million was increased to EUR 80 million to finance 34 projects.⁴² The selection process and management set-up are basically similar as for the MDG3 Fund and the Ministry contracted the consortium PwC/Femconsult for programme management in October 2012. Several of the grantees under FLOW also received funding under the MDG3 Fund. Implementation of the FLOW projects is on-going. The progress report covering 2012-2013 indicates that a majority of the projects were on track (21), seven were delayed and another four seriously delayed. An evaluation of FLOW is foreseen after 2015.

In April 2011, the Government also came with a new policy letter on human rights: '*Responsible for Freedom: Human Rights in Foreign Policy*' (KST 32735-1, 2011). This was an update of the 2007 policy letter; maintaining equal rights for everyone remained a priority (KST 33000-V-2, 2011: 33).⁴³ Discrimination on the basis of sex, equal rights of women, violence against women and SRHR continued to figure among the priority areas in which the Netherlands had an added value. The Government's position was that since equal rights and opportunities for women and men were indispensable for development, democracy, security and prosperity, the Netherlands would provide support for 'the full participation of women in political and administrative decision-making within their societies'.⁴⁴

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2.4 2012-present: Rutte II

Following the appointment of a new Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation in November 2012, a new overall policy combining trade and investment and poverty alleviation was sent to Parliament in April 2013: 'A world to gain – a new agenda for aid, trade and investment' (KST 33625-1, 2013). With the new policy, Government pursues three important goals: eradicate extreme poverty, achieve sustainable, inclusive growth all over the world and success for Dutch companies abroad. The policy announces a differentiation in bilateral partner countries, continued focus on four priorities (women's rights and SRHR, water, food security and security and the rule of law), and further reductions in the Government's aid budget. The aid budget would go down to 0.55% of GDP in

⁴² The increase in budget is partly related to a series of complaints that were issued as regards decisions not to finance certain projects and that were considered justified, partly to Parliament requesting that additional funding be made available.

⁴³ For other priorities see KST 33400-V-11, 2012: 56.

⁴⁴ KST 33000-V-10, 2011: 11; KST 33400-V-2, 2012: 19.

combination with a decline in the share of the budget for Dutch civil society, education in low and middle-income countries, good governance, culture and public support from 2014 onwards.

Amidst these cuts in Dutch aid in the years to come, the Ministry's gender budget is maintained at some EUR 42 million per year. Women's equal opportunities and rights remains a priority theme – as was confirmed with the *new* policy spearhead concerning investing in equal rights for women and SRHR (KST-33625-5, 2013: 20). According to the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (e.g. in KST 32605-125, 2013: 3), the link between gender equality and SRHR that was introduced meant that efforts in the area of women's rights would be intensified. The aim is moreover to ensure more synergy between women's rights and SRHR.⁴⁵ At the same time, the notion of empowerment re-entered the aid lexicon: an effective and credible framework for development 'asks for an independent goal for gender equality and empowerment' (KST 32605-125, 2013: 12). As before, Dutch civil society has a role to play, both as watchdog and implementer of activities in the field of women's rights (KST 33625-34, 2013: 57, 65).⁴⁶

In her letter to Parliament of August 2013, the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation reconfirmed that promoting gender equality and equal rights for women was a priority.⁴⁷ Linked to the Minister's overall agenda of promoting the inclusiveness of development, the main arguments for this position were that: (i) women in developing countries have profited little from macro-economic growth, and (ii) these women remain vulnerable because of their informal employment and the often dismal labour conditions that come with it. Women are also hit hardest by natural disasters and environmental degradation linked to climate change. Moreover, women's rights continue to be under threat and remain insufficiently protected, especially in fragile states. Another reason is to be found in countervailing forces that risk undermining the international consensus on women's rights.

⁴⁵ This translated e.g. in efforts to fight child marriages, and in approaching the fight against VAW from both a SRHR and women's rights perspective (KST 33625-5, 2013: 20). The policy on women's rights and gender equality is also specifically linked to the new human rights policy that was sent to Parliament in June 2013.

⁴⁶ See also KST 33625-39, 2013: 2 and KST 33625-68, 2013, highlighting that civil society can play a role as watchdog: (i) in relation to food security, e.g. with respect to land rights and the participation of women, and as participants in the public private partnerships; and (ii) in relation to water, in terms of providing services in the area of water and sanitation and making sure that women can benefit from these activities, at least on an equal footing (KST 33625-68, 2013: 2-3). Earlier on, gender mainstreaming and the priority themes of the Beijing Platform for Action were highlighted in e.g. the programme 'Thematische Medefinanciering' (2004-2007), the policy framework for strategic alliances with international NGOs (SALIN), and the Policy Framework for Co-financing (2007-2010). Also the policy note on civil society organisations of 2009 highlights the role of civil society in addressing MDG3 (KST 130238, 2009).

⁴⁷ This position is confirmed in e.g. the report on Progress priority themes development cooperation 2013. It is about addressing the more general constraints that women are facing to be(come) active in politics, economically and socially. Focus areas are similar to those mentioned in the policy note, though broader when referring to 'strengthening of the economic position of women'. Strengthening of the international consensus and action for gender equality and women's rights is part of the policy.

The Government would work on integrating a gender focus in all priority areas of Dutch aid and foreign policy, amongst others by promoting the use of gender analyses and gender indicators (KST 30420-177, 2012: 11).⁴⁸ Ministry documents furthermore refer to the need for ensuring inclusion of gender inequality issues into multi-annual plans and in the bilateral political dialogue, both with government and other stakeholders. Bilateral as well as international channels are to be used to realise its ambitions, and the two-track strategy of the past is continued, i.e.:

- A stand-alone women's track focusing on political participation and leadership, economic independence, combating VAW and support for UNSCR 1325 (KST-33625-5, 2013: 20); and
- Mainstreaming, in terms of the integration of women's rights in the spearheads of the Dutch trade and investment policy (KST-33625-5, 2013: 21; 108).⁴⁹ A letter to Parliament of March 2014 refers in this respect to improvements in integrating women's rights and gender equality into the policy spearheads and increasing attention to the role of women at the level of the embassies and bilateral aid (KST 33625-86, 2014: 1). The Ministry has recognised in this respect that 'big challenges remain to transform intentions into effective implementation' (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2014b: 30). The Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation has promised Parliament a letter by spring 2015 on the possibilities of promoting inclusiveness of marginalised groups, including women, in the spearheads.

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'A World to Gain' and the ensuing discussions in Parliament show continued support for: (a) the role of women in agriculture, their access to land and their participation in farmers' organisations; (b) the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (with a focus on political reform, women's political participation, reform of the security system and addressing impunity); and (c) SRHR and combating sexual and other types of violence against women (including child marriages).⁵⁰ Special attention is promised for promoting the role of women in transition processes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) for which a special fund was set up in 2013 to strengthen the capacity of women and their organisations in the region (KST 30420-177, 2012: 10-11).⁵¹

⁴⁸ On this issue see KST-33625-5, 2013: 21.

⁴⁹ This position was reconfirmed in October 2014, when the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation agreed that women's rights and gender equality would get a visible place in all new activities and that on-going activities would be adjusted, where possible. It was realised that in the economic area a lot remained to be done.

⁵⁰ See also Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2014a: 27.

⁵¹ This is the initiative 'Women on the Frontline' which followed the Joint Statement on Supporting Women's Political Empowerment in Emerging Democracies that was signed by Minister Rosenthal and the US Secretary of State Clinton in April 2011 (KST 33400-V-11, 2012: 22-23; KST 33625-5, 2013: 114; KST 33625-35, 2013: 24). For more information see chapter 9. Another key initiative in this respect relates to support for Syrian women and their involvement in the peace process in Syria in collaboration with UN Women ('Syrian Women Initiative for Peace and Democracy') (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2014a: 29).

Although there is a preference for using the term ‘women’s rights’, the notion of gender as a cross-cutting theme (together with SRHR) features also in the Dutch position on the post-MDG agenda (KST 32605-120, 2013: 3). It also comes back in the Dutch vision on the post-2015 aid agenda which stipulates that the global lack of equality between men and women deserves special attention, not only from an equality perspective but also because women have a crucial role in social and economic development: strengthening the position of women is necessary for realising sustainable development and poverty alleviation (KST 32605-125, 2013: 3, 9-10).⁵² As observed in 2014, ‘it will be a challenge to establish a new balance between women’s organisations and women’s own power on the one side and strategic partnerships with other organisations (businesses, trade unions, governments, political and civil society organisations and their generally male leaders) on the other side’ (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2014b: 30).

In June 2013, the Government presented its new human rights policy ‘Justice and respect for all’ (KST 32735-78 (2013)). Similar to earlier human rights policy statements, it identifies equal rights for women as one of the core themes for which Dutch efforts are needed and in which the Netherlands has the necessary expertise and experience. The policy document argues that this focus is partly explained by existing needs, by the international division of labour that the Netherlands aims for, the broad support women’s human rights get in the Netherlands and because of moral and legal obligations (KST 32735-78, 2013: 13). Overall, an integrated approach is suggested, tackling economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights. Moreover, gender equality and equal rights for women are to be promoted through two, mutually reinforcing tracks, i.e.: (i) a focus on specific themes, i.e. leadership and political participation of women, economic self-reliance, and (sexual) violence against women, human trafficking plus SRHR and child marriages (through the campaign ‘Girls not Brides’)⁵³; and (ii) systematic integration of gender aspects in Dutch foreign and trade policies as well as the spearheads of the Dutch development aid policy (KST 32735-78, 2013: 17).

As in 2011, ‘Justice and respect for all’ stresses the importance of strategic alliances to address human rights issues: alliances plus channelling efforts through multilateral organisations and others becomes increasingly important with a declining number of

⁵² Aim with respect to the post-2015 aid agenda and the sustainable development goals is to incorporate an independent goal for women’s rights and to mainstream gender equality into the other aims of this agenda (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2014b: 30). The importance of greater attention to the rights of women and girls was underlined in the High Level Panel on the post-2015 agenda, though, as was recognised in 2013, there was still a long way to go in the negotiations. This necessitates close cooperation with like-minded countries in the dialogue with countries that think differently (KST 32605-133, 2013: 2).

⁵³ See also KST 32735-78, 2013; KST 26150-132, 2013: 10, KST 26150-133, 2013: 19 and KST 33625-40, 2013. KST 32605-130, 2013 explains the reasons for the focus on child marriages. In line with this position, the Netherlands was one of the initiators of a first resolution on child marriages that was adopted at the Human Rights Council in September 2013. Financial support was also given for the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children (EUR 1 million for 2014-2015). Moreover, at the Third Committee, the Netherlands co-submitted a resolution on Child, early and forced marriage that was adopted in October 2013.

embassies and embassy staff – though they continue to play a role (KST 32735-78, 2013: 31).⁵⁴ Strategic use of embassies, the human rights fund and the human rights ambassador would be coupled with the use of ‘innovative approaches’.

In line with the Government's overall emancipation policy for 2013-2016, women's rights are described as inalienable rights. Respect for these rights cannot be taken for granted: they need continuous monitoring and protection (KST 30420-180, 2013); see text box 2.5.

Text box 2.5 *Main features of the Dutch overall emancipation policy (2013-2016)*

Basis for the policy letter is the conviction that women's rights are inalienable human rights. Its core values are expressed in terms of: (a) the freedom of women and men to make their own choices on the division of labour and care and addressing bottlenecks that hamper women in combining work and care and realising their ambitions (*autonomy*); (b) *resilience* as a necessary condition for making autonomous decisions and to be able to act accordingly; and (c) *equality* – which can only be reached in a society that is not ‘gender blind’ but which has an eye for and reacts to differences between women and men and refrains from gender stereotyping. Government has a duty to protect (against violence), to make sure that people's rights are respected, and has a role in creating conditions that stimulate people to be autonomous – to take decisions and act accordingly, alone and together with others. Citizens and civil society have a key role – as watchdog and in terms of organising social change together with government. Simply introducing more government interference is no guarantee for a better position of women and vulnerable groups, but it can support change. As in previous years, the international paragraph refers to the continued importance of protecting women's sexual and reproductive rights, and the need to continue combating violence against women and child marriages. Neither culture or tradition nor religion may be used to justify such practices.

⁵⁴ Also the Third Committee of the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council are seen as important forums for the Netherlands to work on key topics such as women's rights, freedom of religion, etc. in line with its overall human rights policy (KST 26150-132, 2013: 9-10).

2.5 Conclusions and reflections

Compared to the years 2002-2007, attention to gender equality has seen a revival in Dutch foreign and development aid policies during the evaluation period. This revival started with the publication of the policy note 'Our Common Concern' of 2007 and several initiatives that followed the 2007 *Schokland* agreements, and it continues to date.

A key element in justifying Dutch Government involvement is to be found in the importance attached to international (human) rights conventions and agreements and the position of successive Governments that women have the same rights as men – always and everywhere. The international community, including the Netherlands, has a role to play in countering opposition that is increasingly challenging and trampling these rights.

Women's rights and gender equality feature in both the Dutch development aid policies and in its human rights policies. At the same time, though the various policies have introduced different and not always consistent terminology, gender is often perceived as a synonym for 'women'. Use of a key theme like empowerment has seen its up and downs; a clear intervention logic detailing how the Netherlands would realise its ambitions was not developed.

There has been consistency with respect to the attention paid to women's rights and gender equality in the Dutch overall aid and human rights policies of the evaluation period in terms of:

- Combining rights-based arguments reflecting the Dutch position that international human rights agreements and conventions apply to all women, always and everywhere, with instrumental arguments. These instrumental arguments have been used irrespective of the policy area concerned, with concepts like 'smart security', 'smart politics' and 'smart economics' making their entry. The idea that addressing women's needs and rights would enhance the effectiveness and quality of Dutch aid efforts has, however, lost its prominence.
- Realising that to accomplish such equality, account needs to be taken of the fact that women and men have different needs and priorities. Current policies indeed call for more attention to a gender analysis as a starting point for addressing these.
- Maintaining a two-track approach of gender mainstreaming, although not always called as such, and stand-alone activities targeting women. These stand-alone activities have come with a sizeable budget (a total of EUR 288 million for the period 2008-2014) that was maintained despite the cuts in the overall Dutch aid budget. At the same time, given the way in which these stand-alone initiatives were set up, it is not evident how the two tracks would be able to reinforce each other, as was mentioned in 2011 and 2013.
- Focusing on certain thematic priorities (apart from the emphasis on SRHR): combating violence against women, women as leaders and in politics, peace and security, water and sanitation and economic development.

3

Organisational aspects

3.1 Introduction

The literature reviewed for this policy evaluation (IOB, 2015c) shows that many evaluations identified a gap between international gender mainstreaming policies and practice. The term 'gender policy evaporation' is frequently used to indicate what is happening. Several institutional causes are responsible for this phenomenon, as is identified in the review by the African Development Bank in 2012. These causes relate to the following aspects: the presence of gender expertise, gender tools or instruments, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), financial resources, and especially, senior and middle management commitment and accountability. This chapter focuses on what has happened with respect to these factors in the period 2007-2014 in the Netherlands.

3.2 The need for gender expertise

In terms of the organisation of gender expertise, the literature demonstrates that there is no knowledge on the best set-up (ECG, 2012: 7-8). In practice, most aid organisations have (had) a small central team of gender experts stationed at headquarters plus gender 'focal points' in headquarters' departments and at embassies or field offices. However, as IOB (2015c) also shows, these teams of experts were often dissolved in recent years – both in headquarters and at embassy level. To compensate for this, external expertise was sometimes contracted, but this could only solve part of the problem. Training was often initiated to address the issue of thinly spread knowledge of gender equality. With some exceptions, the judgement of this training is not positive and it remains unclear what training works for whom. Moreover, unless made mandatory, it was difficult to get senior management and non-gender specialist operational staff to participate.

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Developments at the Ministry in The Hague

Looking at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague, since the introduction of a Coordinator (for) International Women Affairs in the 1970s, the Ministry's gender expertise has been organised and structured in different ways. In the early years of the evaluation period (2007-2010), the gender unit was part of the Ministry's department for Social and Institutional Development. This unit was to become a Ministry-wide centre of expertise on emancipation. Its main task was to support other departments in operationalising emancipation targets in the Government's integrated foreign policy.⁵⁵ Its capacity was, however, limited; this was also one of the main reasons to sub-contract management of the MDG3 Fund outside the Ministry. Moreover, temporary trainees and interns played an important role in running the unit.

The gender unit moved to the Human Rights department in 2011. The thinking was among others that this would help the unit to better deal with those topics that were part of the competences of the Minister of Foreign Affairs – especially human rights – as well as the aid concerns that were the responsibility of the Minister for Development Cooperation.

⁵⁵ KST 111961, 2007; KST 119600B, 2008: 95; KST 127745, 2009: 112.

However, by 2012 the unit, which had seen the simultaneous replacement of four of its senior staff in 2011 and had only one person responsible for gender mainstreaming, went back to its original department, i.e. the department for Social Development. This transfer was motivated by the reorganisation of the Human Rights department. In the same year, with Parliament concerned about the lack of gender expertise in the Ministry and the Dutch embassies (KST 32735-68, 2012: 29)⁵⁶, it was decided that the Ministry would maintain its gender-expertise.

Since March 2014, this expertise has been united in the Task Force Women's Rights and Gender Equality (TFVG). This Task Force is expected to:

- provide a clear focal point for advice on women's rights and gender equality;
- stimulate cross-fertilisation on these issues among the Ministry's departments;
- play an initiating and supporting role on the theme of women's rights and gender equality both within the Ministry and for the embassies; and
- give women's rights and gender equality a visible place in all interventions as much as possible.

The Task Force includes staff of the departments for social development, human rights, SRHR and stability and humanitarian aid. To support gender mainstreaming in the areas of private sector development, food security and water, a number of TFVG members is based in the departments that deal with environment, water, climate and energy as well as sustainable economic development. As in the past, temporary junior staff plays an important role for the Task Force.

Interviewees are primarily positive about the functioning of the TFVG. A recent review done by the Central Audit Service (Auditdienst Rijk, 2015) is positive as well. It concludes that with the establishment of the Task Force there is now a more easily identifiable contact on women's rights and gender and that policy advice to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation has improved. Joint policy products, policy implementation and public diplomacy initiatives have been developed. Issues still requiring attention include: (i) (external and internal) communication on the aims and activities of the Task Force; (ii) clarification of aims and responsibilities regarding gender mainstreaming between Task Force and other departments; and (iii) the development of a joint vision on the future of the Task Force. Especially in gender mainstreaming further gains can be made with the TFVG as a centre of knowledge and partner for other departments that are responsible for gender mainstreaming within their own policies. How the TFVG can best support embassy staff also remains an issue.

⁵⁶ An internal IOB review done in 2013 indicated in this respect that the unit had limited involvement in the review process; main reason was that the available expertise was too general. At times, external expertise was involved. The review was unable to determine whether this involvement had resulted in substantive adaptations of proposals or assessment memorandums.

To support the TFGV, a Gender Resource Facility was set up in the second half of 2014.⁵⁷ This pool of gender expertise is expected to: (i) advise and support embassies and Ministry departments in translating overall gender policies into concrete programmes and interventions, and (ii) to systematise gender knowledge and make this available to the Ministry. The idea is that more consistent attention to a gender perspective throughout the policy cycle will enhance the effectiveness and relevance of the Ministry's work. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of this arrangement. It is understood that the demand for services is higher than the Ministry expected.

Developments at embassy level

At the level of the Netherlands' embassies, the first Dutch gender experts were assigned in India and Indonesia in the mid-1980s. There were some 20 gender experts in 2001 who gave policy advice on the Dutch bilateral aid programme and built up networks with national stakeholders to make sure that gender was incorporated into national poverty strategies (KST 62026, 2002). They also had a pivotal role in the allocation of the 'Women's Fund'. All these experts had a (part-time) national assistant. The position of these gender experts was, however, abolished early in the new Millennium and their number declined from 17 in 2006 to 8 in 2011 and to zero at present. Only the national experts in the 15 Dutch aid partner countries remained, but for them 'gender equality' features among a range of other responsibilities. An example is Mozambique, where the last full-time gender expert left in 2008. Currently, the embassy in Maputo has a part-time national policy officer who has some 10-20% of her time set aside to coordinate gender activities across the embassy's entire portfolio (i.e. from gender mainstreaming, stand-alone programming and work on the gender-related aspects of HIV/AIDS). As observed above, this state of affairs is similar for other donor countries.

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Gender training

Like other donor countries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs used to have a dedicated 'gender training' for its staff.⁵⁸ In 2011, however, it was decided to stop this training: it was not obligatory and only few people showed an interest. Recently, initiatives were undertaken to incorporate gender issues in Ministry-wide training activities in relation to the Dutch spearheads. However, it was mentioned that this does not go beyond raising awareness on the importance of women's rights and gender equality. For people who are interested, a link is available to the Danish e-learning programme on gender on the Ministry's Intranet.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ A contract was signed with the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) which works together with the consultancy company Femconsult. Earlier on, support to the embassies was provided for a one-year period by staff of the Dutch Sustainability Unit (DSU), which is part of the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment. The earlier initiative of a Gender Knowledge Platform (*Kenniskring gender en emancipatie*), that was set up to improve knowledge management on gender within the Ministry, is no longer active, primarily because of a lack of time and capacity within the Ministry. The initiative 'On Track with Gender' shared a similar fate.

⁵⁸ This included e.g. one-day thematic workshops or seminars on the subject of women and development for Ministry staff in the 1980s; training sessions on macro-planning and gender (2000), and gender budgeting in relation to the PRSP process (2004 and 2005). In 2002, gender was a topic in the general training programmes for new policy staff, management staff and included in a thematic training on poverty reduction and sectoral approaches.

⁵⁹ Furthermore, a training programme on gender and peacekeeping missions was initiated together with Spain within the framework of NAP UNSCR 1325 (IOB, 2015b).

3.3 Attention to gender in the early stages of the programme cycle

There is broad recognition of the importance of addressing gender issues when designing policies, projects and programmes. This is also underlined in a recent study by the Gender Resource Facility: if they are not addressed at the start of the programme cycle, it is unlikely they will ever appear again in implementation and M&E.⁶⁰

Gender tools and instruments – guidelines, checklists, manuals, and handbooks – are generally introduced to facilitate the process of incorporating a gender perspective. A main finding however is that most did not serve their purpose: not obligatory, they were often used haphazardly and were easily qualified as administrative rituals (AfDB, 2012: 13, 35-39, 74-75). Moreover, gender analyses were rarely done properly and rarely followed up during implementation. (On the importance of such analyses see text box 3.1)

Text box 3.1 *On the importance of gender analyses*

The international literature (see IOB, 2015c) confirms that it is important to undertake a gender analysis as a key ingredient of programme and project design. The relevance of such an analysis as a precondition for identifying possible avenues of intervention is underscored by the following observations:

- Violence against women finds its origin in a range of factors that operate at multiple levels, including gender inequalities and ‘historically unequal power relations between men and women and pervasive discrimination against women in both the public and private spheres’ (UN, 2006: ii, 21).
- School enrolment and attainment are not neutral either: whether girls and boys indeed go to school and complete their education depends, amongst others, on socio-cultural norms concerning the importance of girls’ education and the gendered division of labour at household level.
- The factors affecting economic participation are different for men and women, one reason being that women take the brunt of household chores. In agriculture, women and men have distinct roles, perform activities that reflect local traditions and norms on what is considered appropriate for both sexes. Moreover, with the commercialisation of agriculture, the dominant position of men is changing gender roles – in men’s favour.
- In infrastructure, the specific needs and service demands of women in terms of safety and the ability to pay are often different from those of men.
- Also women’s political participation is influenced by existing gender norms that determine its cultural acceptability. It is also affected by stereotyping of female leaders and politicians and by the division of labour at the household level.

⁶⁰ At the same time, merely ‘ticking the gender box’ when designing a project or programme will not suffice; if a gender analysis is only included in the design, but no connection to the implementation and expected results is made, it will become impossible to achieve positive results for women (Hunt and Brouwers, 2003: 14, 51).

Developments in the Netherlands

With the renewed attention to women's rights and gender equality in 2007, Dutch embassies were asked to include this more concretely and operationalise this in their multi-annual and annual plans. However, little guidance was given on how to do this. This situation was little different during the 2011 programming exercise. However, it changed more recently; since 2012, Ministry instructions specifically ask for more attention to women's rights in the different spearheads and point to the need for demonstrating that country programmes are based on a 'careful analysis and diagnostic'.⁶¹ Currently there is also a commitment that an impact analysis for vulnerable groups will be undertaken, which will, amongst others, look into the issue of gender, when revising the embassies' multi-annual plans (KST 33625-107, 2014: 37).

Gender issues may be introduced in different phases of the Ministry's programme cycle, starting with the multi-annual plans that are prepared by the embassies and the departments in The Hague. Assessment memorandums for programmes and projects are a next step. These steps are the focus of the following paragraphs.

Including attention to gender in multi-annual plans

Embassy documents and interviews in Bangladesh, Burundi, Egypt, and Mozambique⁶² show that the policy choices made during the evaluation period were in line with the overall Dutch gender policy. Consequently, their country programmes included a stand-alone track, with funding for specific projects targeting gender equality and women's rights, and attention to gender mainstreaming.⁶³ The thematic focus depended on country context and partners selected. The projects financed were in line with this focus, as is shown below in table 3.1. The case of Mozambique demonstrates that the responsibility for initiating gender mainstreaming cannot lie with the Netherlands embassy alone. In this case, embassy efforts were affected by the lack of capacity of the gender units of the ministries of agriculture and health and of the embassy's implementing partners. They neither had the budget nor the people to tackle mainstreaming in their own organisations (Koning and Taela, 2014: 7, 11).

⁶¹ The general guidelines for 2012-2015 ask for attention to gender as a cross-cutting theme both in the country context analysis and in the risk assessment that is part of it. The annex to the guidelines contains 'guiding questions' pertaining to the issue of 'gender equality'.

⁶² Since 2013, the Netherlands has an embassy in Burundi. Where relevant, the following paragraphs will include references to the state of affairs in this country. Note that these countries have been selected to illustrate this chapter. Their selection is based on the fact that they were visited by the evaluation team during the evaluation process in 2014.

⁶³ In relation to Mozambique see also Taela and Ivens, 2014: 3.

Table 3.1 Attention to gender in multi-annual plans of selected Dutch embassies		
Country	Stand alone track	Mainstreaming
Bangladesh	Protection and promotion of women's rights and safety Combating violence against women Since 2011, specific projects were developed on e.g. child marriage, and women's and girls' working conditions in the textile sector	Education (until 2010) Health Selected spearheads of Dutch aid i.e. food security, water, and SRHR (since 2011)
Egypt	Combating violence against women Women's political participation	Economic development Education (until 2010) Health Water
Mozambique	Capacity building of women's organisations Combating violence against women	Basic and higher education (until 2010) General budget support (until 2010) SRHR Economic development, including land rights Cross-cutting issue in the spearheads on food and nutrition security and rights and water

The Ministry's departments in The Hague are expected to produce multi-annual plans as well. An analysis of these plans shows that attention to gender equality/women's issues varies. They generally recognise the specific issues faced by women and the role women play as potential participants and/or target groups. But this does not always translate into concrete proposals to address them or into commitments that go beyond generic statements that more '*attention is needed*' – provided that it was '*relevant*' – or that '*the linkages with a cross-cutting theme like gender would be strengthened*'.⁶⁴

Gender analysis

While, as shown above, gender analyses are important, the extent to which they have actually been undertaken varied between countries and evolved over time. In [Bangladesh](#), this was determined by: (i) the presence of a full-time national gender expert in the earlier days of the evaluation period; (ii) the practice of regular field visits; and (iii) increased focus on specific sectors (water, SRHR) that went hand-in-hand with growing research into which approaches would work (or not) and an assessment of gender gaps in previous and current projects. In [Mozambique](#), the MASP 2012-2015 is more elaborate than its predecessor on the state of women in Mozambique. Elements of a gender analysis can be found in documents on the main areas of intervention. Examples are a gender audit of land rights interventions and a study with DFID on gender and water and sanitation. In the case of [Egypt](#), the assessment was limited to mapping other projects dealing with gender issues as a means to identify a Dutch niche. With respect to [Burundi](#), where the Netherlands has a more recent presence, a gender analysis was done in relation to a comprehensive food security programme – though

⁶⁴ Quotes from annual plans of various departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

of limited scope and depth – and, more recently, in relation to a regional SRHR programme. Specific studies were also conducted on land rights.⁶⁵ No gender analyses were found for centrally funded development programmes.

Gender in assessment memorandums

The most recent format for the assessment of interventions for which Dutch funding is sought, requires a link between the intervention and the ‘cross-cutting issue’ of women’s rights and gender equality. Other cross cutting issues are climate, private sector development, policy coherence and strengthening civil society. For projects over EUR 1 million, the format calls for incorporating the outcomes of a stakeholder analysis (including women and youth) in proposals. However, none of the formats include requirements on gender disaggregated monitoring data.

A limited internal review done by IOB in 2013 shows that there was variation in the way assessment memorandums dealt with the cross-cutting theme of gender. Partly this variation was explained by its relevance for the activity concerned. A review done in 2014 by the Gender Resource Facility came to similar findings. Of the 18 memorandums covering recent, centrally financed interventions in the area of food security, ten displayed reasonable attention to women and/or gender issues, two gave little attention and the remaining six none whatsoever (Gender Resource Facility, 2014: 7). Part of the problem originates in format design: problem analysis is limited, gender analysis even more so and how beneficiaries will be approached and benefit frequently remains virtually invisible. Inconsistent reflection of policy priorities like women’s rights and gender equality is also attributed to the fact that not all the Ministry’s departments are consulted in the phase of programme design. This also applies to the TFVG (Gender Resource Facility, 2014: 3-4).

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Tools and instruments

As in earlier years⁶⁶, there is now a set of guidelines, monitoring fiches, results chains, etc. for each of the four spearheads of Dutch aid. These guidelines also contain a series of specific analytical questions on the status of women and the specific issues that they may face in relation to serving in the security apparatus and the formal judicial system (Security and Rule of Law); in getting access to land, water, skills and markets and sources of income (Food security) or in participation in programming and decision-making for water and sanitation infrastructure (Water and Sanitation). The Dutch Sustainability Unit of the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment has prepared an elaborate quick reference guide on Integrating Gender Equality in Climate-Smart Development at the

⁶⁵ For a new land tenure security programme with the Dutch NGO ZOA, a comprehensive gender analysis prior to the start of its interventions and gender training for its staff are foreseen.

⁶⁶ This goes back to 1980, when there was a ‘Women and Development checklist’. However, this checklist was hardly used and it was discarded in 1992 when it was replaced by a screening test (‘Ontwikkelingstoets’) (IOB, 1998: 138). Scepticism prevailed: the test was seen as administrative ritual that had to be followed to get a project proposal through. Yet again, another instrument was introduced in 1994 for projects of the equivalent of EUR 450.000 and more, but also this tool was disregarded. The same happened with the sector papers on the role of women in specific aid sectors (e.g. agriculture and water) that were prepared in the period 1989-1992. See Annex 5 for more information.

request of the Ministry. It aims to foster understanding and commitment to the integration of gender equality in climate activities and to provide guidance on its application within the consecutive stages of the policy cycle used by the Ministry. Focus is on five priority themes of the Ministry's climate policy. The guidelines are, however, not easy to find and to what extent they are actually used is unclear. At embassy level, resources from other sources are used when needed.

3.4 Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

The literature shows that M&E of gender equality remains a challenge, especially regarding outcome questions like 'have women benefited from intervention X or Y?'. Gender equality is a topic that is rarely systematically integrated into monitoring systems and evaluations, hence the difficulties in knowing the effects of interventions. The obstacles include unclear concepts, lack of proper indicators and gender disaggregated data, weak evaluation frameworks and an exclusive focus on women in gender mainstreaming. As stressed by the Gender Resource Facility, there is a need for gender-disaggregated data of the final beneficiaries, and the formulation of a baseline that also incorporates factors that prevent women from fulfilling their needs and obtaining their rights (Gender Resource Facility, 2014: 3-4).

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General developments in the Netherlands

By 2000-2002 it was clear that the Ministry's gender-related M&E systems were insufficient, and a promise was made to Parliament to address this. Nevertheless, several years later it was noted that: (i) often little attention was paid to the possible effects of development aid policies on the position of men and women and indicators that could measure these effects; and (ii) that it remained difficult to trace gender equality projects and related expenditures in the Ministry's management system (KST 128944, 2009: 8). A renewed effort was promised to ensure better monitoring and visibility of results (KST 131975, 2009: 8-9). However, it was also recognised that: (i) gender results were often more qualitative than quantitative and were difficult to capture in figures; (ii) attribution of results to specific interventions supported by the Netherlands was difficult as well; and (iii) data collection on the issue of gender was not universally ensured.

By 2012, the Ministry finally reported that a monitoring framework had been prepared to map the results of the aid spearheads and cross-cutting themes like gender (KST 32605-114, 2012: 2). Current guidelines on the spearheads of Dutch development aid policy indeed contain suggestions on how to incorporate 'gender' / 'women' indicators in M&E. An example are the guidelines for the water sector, calling for sex-disaggregated data on e.g. the number of farmers implementing improved water and agricultural techniques in an integrated way and the number of people (sex disaggregated) getting and maintaining access to safe water and sanitation facilities. In addition, information is expected on the number of women in decision-making positions in water resource management institutions, and the share of women from vulnerable groups participating in water, sanitation and health committees.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Similar sex disaggregated requirements are at the same time absent from other M&E frameworks. E.g. the 'Harmonised development results indicators for private sector investment operations' (October 2013), which are subscribed to by FMO is not gender specific and refer only to farmers, families, employees, workers, or students.

In 2014, a results sheet on women's rights and gender equality was introduced. It focuses on the stand-alone activities under the heading of women's rights and gender equality.⁶⁸ The idea was that this would provide the Ministry with an instrument to present evidence of concrete results. This would help to substantiate its claims that 'the Netherlands is a champion of women's rights and gender equality'. However, the data generated were scanty, difficult to aggregate and not published in the required format. The sheet is no longer in use.

M&E practices in the Netherlands

With respect to evaluation, IOB's current 'Evaluation policy and guidelines for evaluations' (2009) states that '(evaluations) should be carried out taking account of the different roles performed by men and women and the aim of achieving gender equality. In policy areas where gender differences are a dimension or effect of the policy pursued, they should be taken into account in the design and implementation of the evaluation' (IOB, 2009a: 6).

Nevertheless, and in line with international experience, M&E of Dutch aid programmes has remained problematic across the board. IOB's evaluations on gender, peace and security (IOB, 2015b) and the MDG3 Fund (IOB, 2015a) demonstrate that M&E was not given the attention needed: it still stops at the level of outputs, and to a lesser extent, of results; what happens next is generally not known. This changed somewhat with the different impact evaluations in the areas of water and sanitation and education. Nevertheless, IOB's evaluation of the Dutch private sector development programmes (2014b) shows that, with few exceptions, evaluations of Dutch (co) financed private sector development programmes do not report on outcomes for final target groups nor deal with issues like income improvement, poverty alleviation and economic growth.⁶⁹ In general, reporting on the results for women faces even bigger constraints, as the different chapters of this report will show.

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While M&E is clearly important, it is hampered by the following factors⁷⁰:

- The lack of gender analyses that assess potential impact on gender relations and women's rights and come up with relevant indicators. This is linked to limited staff capacity to collect field-level data and to compile and analyse this data.⁷¹
- For information on the projects and programmes that it supports, the Ministry often relies on the M&E capacity of other implementing organisations. This capacity varies but is often not sufficient. Their monitoring systems frequently do not comprise gender sensitive (baseline) data or indicators.

⁶⁸ Themes in the results sheet are violence against women, women in decision-making positions, women as economic actors and women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution of conflict and in shaping of post-conflict society.

⁶⁹ See IOB, 2014b: 25-27, 184.

⁷⁰ See for the case of Mozambique Koning and Taela, 2014: 11; Taela and Ivens, 2014: 10 and the embassy's annual report on 2011. Also Geldermalsen and Chavel (2011) refer to the lack of systematic sex disaggregated data at the level of many of the Dutch partners in Mozambique. This made 'it more difficult to analyze women's improved access to markets and their degree of participation' (Geldermalsen and Chavel, 2011: 29).

⁷¹ Better performing evaluations are those related to SRHR, basic education, human rights, water and sanitation, and the evaluations of the Dutch Africa Policy (2008) and support to Nicaragua (2010).

- Reporting on gender mainstreaming and gender equality issues often focuses on activities and specific outputs but not on results.
- The embassy budget for monitoring visits to verify what is happening ‘in the field’ has seen a decline in the past few years. This has forced the embassies to rely on the paper flows of their partners – where the capacity to effectively monitor is limited.

A quick scan of 64 of IOB’s own evaluations and systematic review reports published in the period 2007–2014 ran into similar problems. Selecting only those reports that were expected to have something to say about ‘women’, it showed that the attention paid varies. Close to 25% of IOB’s reports is (virtually) gender blind while another 25% provides some references to women and gender (especially at the policy level). In around 50% of IOB reports the position of women is an integral part of the analysis or is touched upon extensively, but none of these reports go into issues of women’s empowerment or gender relations. Causes identified include: (i) gender was overlooked in the programme design; (ii) it was not included in the evaluation’s terms of reference; (iii) the gender disaggregated monitoring data were not available; and (iv) longer-term effects become visible only some time *after* the evaluation is done.

3.5 Finances & efficiency matters

The review done by the African Development Bank in 2012 (AFD, 2012) shows that for gender mainstreaming, adequate funding is needed throughout the programme cycle. It finds however that even when systems are in place to use the OECD/DAC gender marker, tracking of gender financing has been weak. A similar critical nut is cracked in the most recent evaluation of the European Commission on support to gender equality and women’s empowerment. It refers to inconsistent use of the gender marker, making it ‘impossible to determine with any confidence the EU’s gender spending and the extent of gender mainstreaming in programming’ (European Commission, 2015: ix).

Developments in the Netherlands

As mentioned above, the Netherlands gender policy has a stand-alone track and a mainstreaming track. Budget line 3.2 *Equal rights and opportunities for women*⁷² of the budget for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation is the centrepiece of this stand-alone track. For identifying financial flows under the mainstreaming track, the OECD/DAC gender marker is supposed to be used.

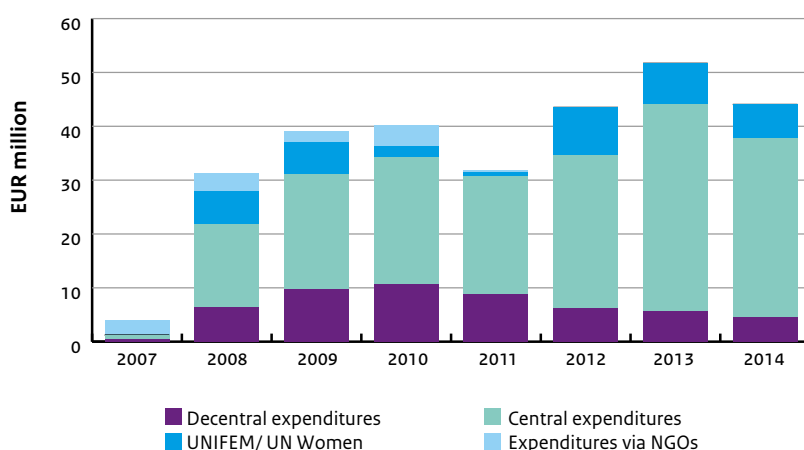
Figure 3.1 gives the expenditures for the stand-alone track on equal rights for women, which totalled some EUR 292.6 million in the period 2007–2014. It clearly reflects the decision back in 2007 to beef up funding for this track through the introduction of the MDG3 Fund, which has continued under FLOW from 2012 onwards (see text box 2.4). These Funds account for some EUR 150 million of total expenditures under budget line 3.2. The central budget also

⁷² This was budget line 5.3 of the joint budget for Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation in the period 2007–2012.

finances the core contributions for UNIFEM/UN Women, plus contributions to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women (15% of expenditures), the central programme ‘Women on the Frontline’ (since 2013) and the implementation of the Dutch NAP UNSCR 1325 (since 2008) plus a variety of comparatively smaller interventions and activities.

Funding for decentralised projects that are handled by the embassies totalled EUR 52.7 million, i.e. 18% over the period 2007-2014. Decentralised spending was halved between 2010 and 2014.

Figure 3.1 Expenditures under budget line 3.2 (2007-2014)



Source: *Financial administration system of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*

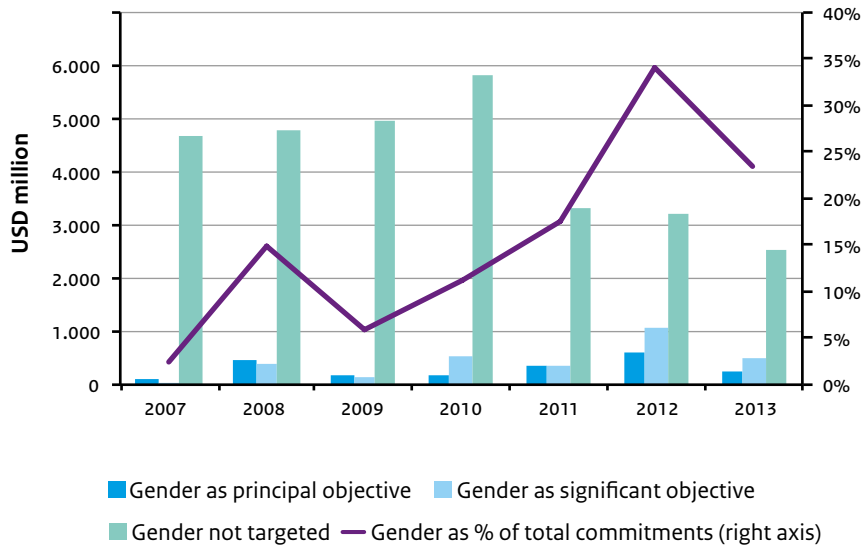
As mentioned in the introduction, it has not been possible to get a coherent picture of the budget for gender mainstreaming over the years. This phenomenon is not unique for the Netherlands as the above-mentioned quotes demonstrate.

For the Netherlands, it was found that the gender marker was applied when ‘gender’ was neither a principal nor a significant objective, on some occasions it was *not* applied even though ‘gender’ may have been a principal or a significant objective.⁷³ For this reason it is also impossible to explain the changes that may have occurred over the years with any certainty. Since these data are nevertheless reported to OECD/DAC, reflected in its database and sometimes used in international comparisons, figure 3.2 is included. For the interventions that were screened, this figure shows an overall picture for ‘gender’-related commitments for the period 2007-2013. Given this state of affairs and the findings of the review of the African

⁷³ According to OECD, ‘An activity can target gender equality as a “principal objective” or “significant objective”. ‘Principal’ means that gender equality was an explicit objective of the activity and fundamental in its design. ‘Significant’ means that gender equality was an important, but secondary, objective of the activity. ‘Not targeted’ means that the activity was screened for promoting gender equality, but was found to not be targeted to it’ (OECD, 2008).

Development Bank, this report has refrained from making comparisons with other OECD/DAC member states. For similar reasons, this report also refrained from providing more detailed data for the different themes that are addressed in the subsequent chapters.

Figure 3.2 Overall gender earmarked and un-earmarked commitment (2007-2013)



Source: OECD/DAC database.

Text box 3.2 summarises the findings of IOB (2015b) on efficiency findings with respect to the MDG3 Fund.

Text box 3.2 Summary of efficiency findings from the MDG3 Fund evaluation

All grantees of the MDG3 Fund used their own budget and financial reporting format. No result-based financial reporting was required. This made an assessment of the Fund's efficiency difficult and resulted in a focus on the following issues: (i) the share of the MDG3 Fund to the overall project budget of the grantees; (ii) the coherence between inputs, outputs and ambitions; and (iii) the quality of the M&E of the MDG3 Fund projects.

On the first issue, the average contribution from the MDG3 Fund equalled some 30% of the grantees' budget; this share range between 12% and 60%. Grantees were not required to co-finance the project; in practice, the MDG3 Fund financed between 20% and 100% of project costs.

On this second issue, the evaluation found that efficiency was influenced by a good design of the intervention logic, a good balance between input, realised output and outreach, a balanced budget, plus effective and efficient cooperation with implementing partners and other stakeholders. Overhead costs varied but were very high in individual cases. High overhead costs were identified when projects covered a large number of countries, were implemented by a large number of partner organisations and had failed to introduce cost-effective management mechanisms and procedures. In some projects outreach was limited and could not justify the level of overhead costs. Efficiency was also weaker when projects were implemented from the grantees' head office directly. Organisations with a tradition of re-granting through calls for proposals appeared to be more efficient and reached out to many community-based (women's) organisations.

M&E was identified as one of the weaker features of the MDG3 Fund. Grantees were only able to provide reliable data at activity – and to a limited extent – at output level. M&E systems of multi-country programmes provided aggregate data that failed to give any insight into results achieved at national, regional and international level and the linkages between them.

3.6 Commitment & accountability

The literature shows that senior and middle management has a key role in ensuring gender mainstreaming and in creating the enabling environment and systematic approaches needed. Evaluations from a range of countries show that in practice this support was not consistently provided (AfDB, 2012). Two main reasons are identified: (i) too many competing leadership and development priorities (from poverty reduction, private sector development to climate change) that caused gender equality to become a cross-cutting issue in education and health, but a forgotten issue in other sectors; and (ii) a lack of performance benchmarks or delivery standards to hold leaders accountable. Coherent management strategies for sustained implementation of gender mainstreaming were absent. While gender mainstreaming tools existed, management did not support these tools with adequate staffing or the required organisational changes, resources, or budgets. Looking more specifically at accountability, the African Development Bank (2012) suggests that if there is one thing we can learn from previous experiences, it is that accountability and incentive systems are essential for effectively mainstreaming gender within donor organisations. However, evaluations have regularly observed that systems to make sure that gender became 'everyone's business' were generally lacking. There were neither rewards nor sanctions to

influence behaviour. As a result, the implementation of gender mainstreaming largely became a 'voluntary exercise, dependent on the commitment and interest of individuals' (AfDB, 2012: 48).

Developments in the Netherlands

Over the years, external and internal publications have been quite critical on whether senior management in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has done enough to ensure that women's rights and gender equality are indeed addressed, as was agreed at political level.⁷⁴ In its conclusions on the Netherlands, the European Commission's recent evaluation is more positive: 'there has been more consistent political leadership' and both internal and external accountability systems ensure that 'commitments are not forgotten at strategy and programming levels, and that managers are mindful of the need to adequately resource the delivery of commitments made' (European Commission, 2015: viii).⁷⁵

Interviews conducted in the course of this policy evaluation show that the 'bureaucratic wall of indifference', that was observed in 2001, has vanished (Verloo, 2001: 5). However, women's rights and gender equality is a theme that still is too easily disregarded. This is evident from the inconsistency with which women's rights and gender equality was picked up in relevant policy documents. Policy documents on private sector development in developing countries (2011) and on corporate social responsibility (2012) as well as the International Security Strategy (2013) show a distinct lack of attention to gender issues, unlike the policy documents on education up until 2010. This is also clear from the inconsistent use of the gender marker and the resulting lack of insight in the gender mainstreaming-related budget.

Looking at commitment, the findings of this policy evaluation are mixed. On the *positive* side, it observes that:

- 1) Amidst a wave of aid budget cuts, funding for the gender stand-alone track has been maintained and increased over the years (albeit with a decline in funding at embassy level), and the Human Rights Fund was opened up for women's rights issues. Ample resources are also set aside for SRHR;
- 2) The recently established Task Force for Women's Rights and Gender Equality was structured in such a way that it has 'antennas' throughout the Ministry's departments, which is essential for its internal network; and
- 3) The need for technical advice in the area of women's rights and gender equality was partly catered for with the introduction of the Gender Resource Facility, even though such external technical assistance cannot fully compensate for the limited gender capacity at the Ministry itself.

⁷⁴ See Verloo, 2001: 5; Roggeband, 2009: 72 and the internal institutional review done in 2006: Tjoelker et al., 2006.

⁷⁵ This conclusion is somewhat surprising, since at the same time the evaluation was unable 'to identify any evidence of how decision-makers ensure gender concerns are adequately reflected in programming and dialogue' (European Commission, 2015: 54).

On a more *critical* note, the evaluation also observes that:

- 1) Gender training, which was only taught on a voluntary base, virtually disappeared at a time when knowledge on women's rights and gender equality was limited;
- 2) The Netherlands had no clear international gender policy up till 2011. Moreover, the policy note published in 2011 was very ambitious but lacked clear targets, indicators and realistic and measurable results;
- 3) When contracting third parties, the importance of mainstreaming gender was not sufficiently stressed. This has led to the financing of programmes and projects that failed to incorporate women's rights and gender mainstreaming into their design; and
- 4) Throughout the Ministry, including its evaluation department, the emphasis on adequate M&E has been insufficient. The focus has been on activities and outputs and much less on results.

With respect to accountability, the current situation is found to be similar to that observed in 2006 (Tjoelker et al., 2006). In brief, incorporating 'gender' has remained optional. Whether it is actually done depends to a considerable extent on the individual staff member in The Hague or at the embassies or of the third parties contracted for programme management or implementation. Neither positive nor negative incentives exist to make sure that 'gender' is addressed and that staff and organisations are indeed accountable for implementing what has been agreed upon at the political level.

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3.7 Conclusions and reflections

Already for many years, it is often stated that gender mainstreaming has failed and that there is a gap between the policies and the actual practice of mainstreaming. The literature reviewed for this policy evaluation shows that the way in which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has handled women's rights and gender equality at the organisational level considerably resembles the practice in other like-minded donor countries.

The following main similarities were identified:

- mixed messages with respect to the commitment to women's rights and gender equality as one of the Ministry's key priorities for its foreign and development aid policies;
- a lack of clear accountability mechanisms, both internally and in relation to third parties contracted for programme management and project implementation;
- few gender specialists at the embassy level, dealing with gender only on a part-time basis and with gender-mainstreaming coming second amidst a range of other priorities;
- a dependence on relatively junior staff on temporary contracts in The Hague;
- the evaporation of 'gender training' since 2011, which was only partly compensated by short-term, ad hoc 'gender awareness' raising in thematic training programmes;
- little attention to gender analyses in the different spearheads of the Dutch development aid policy at country level and in centrally financed programmes;

- little insight into the financing of gender mainstreaming as a result of inadequate use of the OECD/DAC gender marker; and
- weak M&E with respect to 'gender' – this concerns the Ministry's 'own' programmes and the programmes co-financed. Sex disaggregated data, with few exceptions, are often not collected and if indicators and information are available, these focus on inputs, activities and immediate outputs – generally in terms of numbers of women 'reached'. Measuring results receives less attention – outcomes and impacts are generally not addressed. IOB's own evaluations do not escape a critical judgment either: only in around 50% of its reports is the position of women an integral part of the analysis or is it touched upon more extensively.

At the same time, the Netherlands:

- Has maintained its 'gender unit' at the Ministry level and has given it new impetus by both establishing the Task Force Women's Rights and Gender Equality with members throughout the Ministry's departments, and contracting external gender expertise;
- Has re-introduced a budget for the stand-alone track of the gender policy, which has survived the cuts in the aid budget since 2010;
- Has maintained women's rights and gender equality as priorities in country programmes, increasingly focusing on the different spearheads of Dutch development aid policy.



4

Violence against women

4.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with a brief on the issue of violence against women (VAW), its prevalence and its complex causes and on insights from the literature on what works. Subsequently, the Ministry's policies for combating VAW are discussed, followed by an overview of what has been done in practice. Particular attention is paid to diplomatic efforts at the level of different UN bodies, including the Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR) under the aegis of the Human Rights Council, within the European context and in the bilateral political dialogue. The chapter then presents what is known of the results of projects and programmes. These results concern the UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women, the MDG3 Fund, Dutch civil society, the Human Rights Fund and bilateral projects in Bangladesh and Mozambique.

4.2 Violence against women – the issues

There is a range of international resolutions and agreements that condemn VAW and classify it as a violation of women's human rights.⁷⁶ Signing these, obliges states to take action, and many countries have indeed done so, although certainly not all, nor have they done so for all types of violence (World Bank, 2014: 75).⁷⁷ Women's organisations have used this international framework and the standards and norms it embodies in their lobbying and advocacy activities.⁷⁸ At the same time, having legislation and policies in place is only a first step. Unless implemented, the risk is that they remain largely symbolic. Recent literature demonstrates that implementation is lagging behind in many countries, due to a variety of political, institutional, ideological and/or financial reasons. Law enforcement institutions are often under-funded, inaccessible, incompetent or even corrupt, unwilling or unable to enforce laws. As a result, '(most) prevention activity worldwide continues to be driven by women's, children's and other civil society organisations, with limited resources' (Fergus, 2012: 14).

⁷⁶ These include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979; General Recommendations #12 and #19 of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women of 1989 and 1992; the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993); the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993); the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and its follow-up resolutions of more recent years.

⁷⁷ The different types of violence are e.g. elaborated in the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women of 1993.

⁷⁸ See e.g. Htun and Weldon, 2012 and IOB, 2015c.

Whereas underreporting of VAW is prevalent⁷⁹, international data show that VAW remains a universal phenomenon that can be found everywhere and not only in situations of conflict or crisis. It is 'one of the most widespread violations of human rights' (UN Women, 2013: 12) – also in the Netherlands (KST 30420-180, 2013: 9). Intimate partner violence is the most common form of VAW but often goes unchallenged. According to the WHO, one in every three women over 15 years is confronted with physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence worldwide, though this share varies across countries (WHO, 2013: 2, 16). According to the same source, around 7% of women worldwide have experienced violence by a *non-partner*, with the highest rates reported in high-income countries. Irrespective of the perpetrator, VAW can have major medical, psychological as well as economic consequences – also for the next generation – and may limit women's ability to participate fully and share in the benefits of development.

On the *causes* of VAW, the literature indicates that multiple risk factors increase the likelihood of VAW in a particular setting. Gender inequalities are among these factors but 'intersect with other forms of inequality as well as variations in the larger political economy to differentiate the experience of violence for different groups of men and women' (Kabeer, 2014: 9). The knowledge base of what works to *prevent* VAW is limited, as is shown in IOB (2015c). This is especially true for developing countries and (post-)conflict countries (Spangaro et al., 2013: 2). Though the evidence is growing, many gaps remain.⁸⁰ There is no single recipe that is valid throughout the world. Still, the literature reflects an emerging *communis opinio* that there is a need for 'complex interventions' at 'multiple levels'. Such interventions address both environmental and structural factors as well as factors working at the individual level (What Works, 2014: 8-9; World Bank, 2014: 71; Morrison et al., 2007: 28). Using one intervention method or using 'single sector responses' can achieve results 'but these will be limited' (DFID, 2012a: 8).

⁷⁹ Women often do not report intimate partner violence since it is considered a 'normal' aspect of marriage and family life, expressing men's legitimate authority over women, or a 'private' matter outside the remit of the law' (Kabeer, 2014: 4). Barriers 'to disclosing and reporting violence are exacerbated in conflict and crisis' (Spangaro et al., 2013: 17).

⁸⁰ To address this caveat in knowledge of what works to prevent violence against women and girls, i.e. preventing violence from occurring, *What Works To Prevent Violence* was set up. This is a GBP 25 million global programme administered by a consortium led by the Medical Research Council of South Africa, in partnership with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Social Development Direct, on behalf of DFID.

4.3 Dutch policies for combating violence against women

VAW has been a key theme in both Dutch human rights and development aid policies for decades – and continues to be a priority.

Back in June 2007, an agreement to eliminate VAW across the globe was signed between the Dutch government and public and private partners; the so-called *Schokland* agreement *Eliminate violence against women across the globe!*⁸¹ An ‘active and intensified bilateral policy in this area’ was announced and by 2008 Dutch embassies in eight countries were expected to have plans on how they would contribute to combating VAW. For the period 2008-2011, some EUR 21 million was reserved for this purpose. This also came with a new monitoring instrument that both the Ministry and Dutch civil society would use, providing a consolidated overview of the overall Dutch efforts in this area.⁸² While many embassies did indeed make an effort to address violence against women as part of their human rights strategy (KST 116980, 2008: 18-19), this instrument was not used in practice, in part due to the changes in the Ministry’s gender unit in 2011.

Violence against women has been dealt with in Dutch international policies related to child marriages, SRHR as well as with respect to women in (post) conflict situations.⁸³ These policies recognise that reducing VAW is possible, provided that this is done systematically, addressing prevention, law enforcement, advocacy, and care for survivors, and involves all stakeholders concerned, including men. Strong local women’s organisations have an important role to play. The international policies thus reflect what is advocated in the literature on multi-faceted approaches. What is more, VAW has featured prominently in the Dutch national emancipation policies adopted over the years, stressing the importance of addressing domestic violence, forced marriages, FGM and honour-related violence.⁸⁴

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that in September 2007 the Ministry’s Human Rights Fund was opened up for, amongst others, activities addressing VAW.⁸⁵ Combating VAW became one of its priority themes. This allowed the Dutch embassies to finance capacity-building initiatives of human rights organisations working on this theme.

⁸¹ For more details on this agreement and the obligations the signatories had agreed to, see Meijer and De Boer, 2008: 10-11.

⁸² KST 123836, 2008: 30; KST 132821B, 2009: 113.

⁸³ See e.g. KST 47994, 2000: 40; KST 74461, 2004: 24; KST 94003, 2006: 63; KST 105358, 2007: 26; KST 108425B, 2007: 18, 97; KST 123836, 2008: 36, 65; KST 117560, 2008: 6-7; KST 116980, 2008: 14; KST 127745, 2009: 46, 49, 113.

⁸⁴ See e.g. KST 30420-160, 2011: 8; KST 30420-177, 2012: 2.

⁸⁵ KST 99333-2, 2006: 33 and KST 123836, 2008: 36. Other activities that were eligible concerned activities against discrimination, promoting the rule of law and support for the ratification of key international legislation such as CEDAW.

To implement its policies, the Netherlands has used a variety of channels, financial incentives and diplomacy as is shown in table 4.1.⁸⁶

Table 4.1 Channels, instruments and diplomacy used to implement VAW policies		
Channels and instruments	Diplomacy	Funding
United Nations		
General Assembly		
Security Council		
Third Committee		
Committee on the Status of Women		
Human Rights Council		
UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women		
Europe		
European Union		
Council of Europe		
Bilateral		
Bilateral diplomacy at country level		
Human Rights Fund		
MDG3 Fund		
FLOW		
Civil society		
Dutch NGOs		

4.4 Dutch diplomacy on women's rights

4.4.1 Initiatives at the level of the UN

For decades, the Netherlands has underscored the relevance of the UN in the areas of human rights and women's rights, including VAW. Interviews as well as documents show that given the opposition to a progressive agenda on these topics, the role played by the Netherlands has been both necessary and appreciated. They confirm the rationale for Dutch international involvement, as explained in chapter 2.

⁸⁶ See e.g. KST 33625-74, 2014. The Netherlands also gave EUR 700,000 to the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (2008) to set up a databank with information on national policies and legislation in the area of VAW. The databank was put on line in January 2009 (<http://sgdatabase.unwomen.org/home.action>). Support was also provided to the global campaign 'We can end all violence against women'. There is also a regional human rights fund for Central America (EUR 2.5 million per year for the period 2013-2015) to support, amongst others, vulnerable groups like women and to improve access to justice (KST 32735-78, 2013). These initiatives have remained outside the scope of this policy evaluation. Since VAW is a theme that cuts across different budget lines and Funds, it is impossible to indicate how much money is spent on it.

The relevance of this involvement is twofold. First of all, both the Netherlands and women's organisations can apply a yardstick to monitor how norms and standards are included in national laws and how these are implemented. Thus, norms and standards can provide indispensable inputs for exercising diplomatic leverage and pressure. Secondly, bringing the national legal context in line with the international normative framework is an important prerequisite for more transformative change. It is therefore equally important to support initiatives that translate this framework into tangible improvements at a local level. The following paragraphs elaborate on this issue and describe Dutch initiatives in the area of combating VAW through the UN entities incorporated in table 4.1 above.

Records of *UN Security Council* meetings show that during the evaluation period, representatives of the Netherlands have addressed the Council (of which it was not a member) on several occasions, consistently asking for attention to VAW, in particular VAW in conflict situations.⁸⁷

At the level of the *Third Committee*⁸⁸, the Netherlands has initiated the resolutions on 'Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women'. This was done together with France in 2007 and 2009 and with Belgium in 2008.⁸⁹ Since 2011, The Netherlands has submitted the resolution with France (see text box 4.1).

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UN records show that the Netherlands has furthermore been among the early supporters of (revised) draft resolutions that were initiated by other (groups of) countries in the Third Committee. These concerned e.g. eliminating rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations, trafficking women and girls (2010), and CEDAW (2011).⁹⁰ Lastly, in 2009, together with the US and Brazil, the Netherlands organised a side-event on violence against girls during the ministerial week of the General Assembly and in 2012 on VAW. Together with France, a side event on combating VAW was organised in October 2013.

⁸⁷ Speeches were delivered by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and for Development Cooperation and civil servants of the Ministry (IOB, 2015b: 81). Furthermore, every year a Dutch female citizen represents Dutch civil society to address the plenary session of the Committee.

⁸⁸ Women's rights and gender issues are addressed in this Committee. Its meetings have provided a platform to adopt gender related resolutions submitted by UN Member States or the Presidency of the Committee. These resolutions cover a broad range of topics under the heading of advancement of women. With the exception of resolutions on CEDAW, these resolutions were accepted without voting by both the Third Committee and the General Assembly.

⁸⁹ This has a long history going back to the late 1990s, as is evident from KST 48648, 2000: 47. Drafts of other resolutions were initiated by other UN member states.

⁹⁰ In 2011, it also supported a resolution on women's political participation.

Text box 4.1 *The Dutch-French resolutions on violence against women*

- In 2009, the resolution called upon the UN and Member States to make more money available to combat VAW and to prosecute and punish perpetrators. The UN was asked to formulate a uniform set of indicators to be able to assess the size of the problem and to support countries in developing action plans.
- In 2010, the resolution focused on preventing VAW through national action plans, legislation and training.
- The resolution of 2012 called for countries to offer protection, amend legislation, train care workers and offer victims better aftercare. It reconfirms the Dutch position on the universality of human rights – also for women: religion, culture and tradition may never be used as an excuse to justify violence against women. It also gave the business community a responsibility in protecting women's rights.
- In 2014, the resolution called on states to protect women against all forms of violence by investing in preventative measures and tackling impunity and to step up their efforts to counter violent extremism. It also condemned violence by extremist groups against civilian populations, including women and children and expressed concern about the unprecedented number of female refugees and displaced persons.

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Agreed conclusions, resolutions and decisions on VAW are also adopted at the level of the UN's *Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)*, as is shown in table 4.2.⁹¹ UN records show that the Netherlands was an early supporter of resolutions on e.g. FGM in 2007 and 2008 and in 2010. It also played an active role in the negotiations preceding their adoption.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has a main role in this respect. Representatives from the Netherlands⁹² have given statements at each CSW meeting. The Netherlands was also present on a series of high level panels on CEDAW, women's participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace building, women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS and women's economic empowerment. Furthermore, in parallel with the CSW meetings, the Netherlands has organised a series of side events in several years. This is done with other countries, Dutch or international NGOs, Southern NGOs benefiting from MDG3 Fund financing and, on one occasion, with UNAIDS.

⁹¹ These agreed conclusions are the Commission's principal output; they are *different* from the resolutions adopted at the Third Committee. They contain an assessment of progress, as well as of gaps and challenges with respect to promoting women's rights in the political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. They also contain recommendations for action by Governments, intergovernmental bodies and other institutions, civil society actors and others, to be implemented at the international, national, regional and local level.

⁹² In recent years this was a representative from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, and in 2014 it was the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation.

Table 4.2 Overview of agreed conclusions and resolutions of the CSW on combating VAW (2007-2014)								
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Agreed conclusions								
Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child								
Resolutions and decisions								
Ending female genital mutilation								
Forced marriage of the girl child								
Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts								

The Netherlands has recognised the important role of the [Human Rights Council](#) of which it is a member since October 2014. It sees the Council as one of the UN forums to enter into a human rights dialogue with other countries and to raise country-specific human rights situations. It also sees it as an important vehicle for setting norms for freedoms that the Netherlands cherishes. At the same time it realises that the Council's effectiveness may be affected by coalitions formed,⁹³ as well as by attempts to restrain its clout and independence or attempts to undermine the respect for the universality of the human rights. Wielding influence requires careful and skilful manoeuvring and collaboration with like-minded countries. In 2012, the Netherlands acted as EU negotiator for a resolution on violence against women.

In line with this general position, the Netherlands has played an active role in the [Universal Periodic Reviews](#) (UPR), one of the key instruments of the Human Rights Council. It has helped to introduce the country-level 'human rights exam' and volunteered as one of the first countries to go through this exam – since 2008 it has done so twice. The Netherlands has also used the UPR framework to address women's issues in specific countries through other means than recommendations. It did so for example in 2009 with respect to Yemen and Ethiopia.⁹⁴ In the case of Bangladesh, its UPR process in 2009 gave the Netherlands a reason to discuss human rights issues at the EU human rights working group in Dhaka. The Netherlands also supported several Bangladeshi NGOs that prepared an alternative report on CEDAW, calling upon the Bangladesh government to abolish two restrictions to CEDAW.

⁹³ See e.g. Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2011: 131 and Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2010: 190 on the case of the DRC.

⁹⁴ The Netherlands complimented Yemen on the decision to increase the legal age for marriage for girls to 17 years and asked its Government to enforce this new legislation. In case of Ethiopia, the Netherlands intervened on the issue of female genital mutilation.

Looking at the recommendations made by the Netherlands, one can observe that:

- Up to 2013, women's rights were the subject of 144 recommendations, i.e. about one fifth of all recommendations since 2008.⁹⁵ In comparison to like-minded states, only Norway has a similar track record, while for Denmark, Sweden and the UK, this share ranged between 9% and 17%.
- Just over half of these recommendations (73) concerned VAW in a broad sense, 23 were on SRHR (e.g. access to health services and safe abortion) and another 20 on women's economic rights such as inheritance and property rights and labour market opportunities. This is quite similar to the records of like-minded states like the UK, Denmark and Sweden. Norway on the other hand pays comparatively more attention to women's economic rights.
- Especially in the early years, the Netherlands focused on CEDAW⁹⁶ and issues such as ratifying the Convention, aligning national legislation with CEDAW provisions, signing its facultative protocol and ensuring follow-up to recommendations of the CEDAW Committee. This fits with a tradition that goes back to the signing of CEDAW: since the early 1980s, the Netherlands has raised objections in several forums to reservations and declarations made by other states with respect to certain provisions of the Convention (especially Articles 2, 5, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 16). It considers these reservations unpermitted for being incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention. The Netherlands, together with Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, and the UK, was among the states most regularly engaged in objecting to reservations.
- More than three quarters (111) of the Dutch recommendations were accepted, 21 resulted in no or only a general response ('noted') and only in 12 cases the recommendations were rejected. In terms of rejections, in 5 cases recommendations related to CEDAW (adaptation of national laws to CEDAW, ratification of the CEDAW protocol)⁹⁷ and in 3 cases they were about the adaptation of family or penal codes to ensure gender equality.⁹⁸ The remaining cases relate to the equal treatment of same sex couples and overall gender equality aspects.

⁹⁵ The Netherlands did not only issue such recommendations, it also received them from other countries (i.e. Ghana, India, Mexico, Slovenia and South Africa) as is evident from the Universal Periodic Review – The Netherlands National Interim report of April 2010. E.g. according to South Africa, the Netherlands ought to 'accelerate' efforts in increasing female representation in top positions in the senior public service to 25 per cent by 2011'.

⁹⁶ For more details on the reservations made with respect to CEDAW, see e.g. Freeman, 2009: 1, 4.

⁹⁷ Hungary, Iran, Lebanon, Qatar and Yemen. CEDAW ratification was also raised by the Minister of Foreign Affairs during a state visit to Saudi Arabia in 2009 (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2010: 49).

⁹⁸ Algeria, Brunei, Kuwait.

4.4.2 Initiatives at the level of the Council of Europe and the European Union ⁹⁹

At the level of the *Council of Europe* the Netherlands was a member of the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men. This Committee also dealt with preparing for the *Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence* of 2011. The Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security has played a central role in the negotiations on the convention. According to IOB's policy evaluation on Dutch initiatives to strengthen the Council of Europe, the text of the Convention is largely in line with the Dutch position (IOB, 2011g: 12, 67). The Netherlands signed the Convention in November 2012; ratification was originally foreseen for 2014 but is now planned for mid-2015.¹⁰⁰

At the level of the *European Union*, the Netherlands has aimed for a coherent, ambitious and effective EU external human rights policy. It favoured the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy of 2012 (KST 32735-78, 2013) according to which '(the) EU will continue to campaign for the rights and empowerment of women in all contexts through fighting discriminatory legislation, gender-based violence and marginalisation'.¹⁰¹ It was important for the Union to use its political influence to improve the human rights situation in partner countries. The human rights efforts of EU member states and the EU Commission should be complementary, also in an area like women's rights.

During the evaluation period, the Netherlands was particularly active in: (i) the development of new EU guidelines on VAW at the level of the EU Working Party on Human Rights (adopted in December 2008); (ii) a task force on VAW (established under the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) that made an inventory of the state of affairs in over 100 countries and that developed country specific action plans on this topic; (iii) the development of the EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development (see text box 4.2); (iv) the development of the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2012); and (v) an informal EU Taskforce 1325 and related commissions on the operationalisation of the EU Comprehensive Approach on the implementation of UNSC resolutions 1325 and 1820. Efforts were also made to ensure that human rights and gender issues were picked up within the framework of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ See KST 110541, 2007: 51; KST 132821B, 2009: 18, 113; KST 130473, 2009: 61; KST 32500-V-2, 2010: 70; RES 2275, 2010: 49; KST 32735-46, 2011: 7; Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2012: 23; KST 32605-21, 2011: 4. For the broader picture of Dutch involvement in human rights issues at the Council of Europe, see IOB's evaluation of the Dutch foreign human rights policy (IOB, 2014a).

¹⁰⁰ Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2013: 45; KST 30420-211, 2014: 8.

¹⁰¹ For more details see Council of the European Union (2012). O'Connell (2013) provides a critical review on the implementation of the Gender Action Plan. At the same time, IOB, 2013d observes that, while gender as a crosscutting theme appears in EDF programming documents, this mainly appears a paper exercise: 'the issues are not addressed in implementation in a satisfactory manner' (IOB, 2013d: 206).

¹⁰² On this issue see e.g. KST 33000-V-10, 2011: 36-37.

Text box 4.2 *The EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's empowerment*

The EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's empowerment was adopted in June 2010. This committed EU Member States to undertake a 'joint policy dialogue on gender equality for gender mainstreaming and gender stand-alone programming' and to establish gender leads in partner countries (Taela and Ivens, 2014: 6). It e.g. committed the Netherlands to a target of 75% of all new ODA proposals being gender sensitive using the OECD DAC gender marker. The Commission has prepared three annual reports on the implementation of the Plan to date. These are based on inputs received from EU Delegations and (some) EU member states, including the Netherlands, and presented to the Council Committee on Development. A critical external review of the Action Plan was completed in April 2015 as part of the Commission's thematic evaluation on gender equality.

4.4.3 Bilateral diplomacy

Gender equality, women's rights and VAW were topics in the political and human rights dialogues conducted by the Netherlands embassies. These used the international norms and standards referred to above. Cooperation was also sought with embassies of like-minded countries. The embassies were also involved in a variety of donor coordination mechanisms and bilateral talks (especially with the Nordics) on gender equality and women's rights, for example:

- In *Bangladesh*, where the embassy was seen as a progressive partner with good knowledge of the local institutional landscape. This allowed it to play a role in the policy dialogue, especially in the area of VAW. Until about 2010, the embassy chaired the consultative groups of gender and governance together with NORAD. The embassy still attends the gender consultative group, but its role is less prominent now and more strictly linked to the Dutch spearheads that have directed the focus of the bilateral programme in Bangladesh.
- In *Burundi*, where the embassy has addressed VAW (especially the behaviour of the national police towards victims) in its human rights dialogue. The political climate has made it difficult to put women's land rights on the agenda. In this case, the embassy has identified the need for stronger links between the Dutch aid programmes and the political agenda to provide the embassy with evidence-based arguments to address sensitive issues such as women's rights.

¹⁰³ The report is online available at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/evaluation-eu-support-gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment-partner-countries-final-report_en. Its conclusions are critical about the performance of the Gender Action Plan observing that '(as) a roadmap for translating the EU's global GEWE commitments into action and results, the GAP is not fit for purpose' and that '(weak) systems for GAP reporting and accountability are symptomatic of the low priority that (gender equality and women's empowerment) has received in practice and further undermine the EU's ability to deliver to its commitments' (European Commission, 2015: 4).

- In [Mozambique](#), where the Netherlands is recognised for its strong position on gender equality.¹⁰⁴ The embassy is also involved in different networks and working groups in which women's rights and gender equality issues are discussed. There has been a long history of cooperation on gender equality with e.g. Sweden, Denmark and Oxfam Novib, amongst others on VAW.¹⁰⁵
- In [Egypt](#), on the other hand, the bilateral dialogue was hampered by the fact that government women's institutions had little recognition in society.

In addition, women's rights were also on the agenda during country visits of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and for Development Cooperation.

4.5 Results

The Netherlands has (co-) financed (women's) organisations that address the issue of VAW through different channels:

- The UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women;
- The MDG3 Fund and its successor FLOW, as well as Dutch NGOs subsidised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- The Human Rights Fund; and
- Bilateral aid resources in Bangladesh and Mozambique.

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The following paragraphs describe what is known of the results accomplished through these different channels, primarily by using the evaluation reports of the organisations concerned.

4.5.1 The UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women

The Netherlands has been supporting the UN Women administered Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women since 2007.¹⁰⁶ The decision to do so was in line with its aim to put political pressure on governments and the UN system to address VAW, combined with additional financial means.¹⁰⁷

An evaluation by UNIFEM of 2009 concluded that the Trust Fund had been a relevant mechanism to promote the enforcement of laws and the implementation of policies to end VAW. It had provided resources in a field where these were limited and had given access to technical expertise (UNIFEM Evaluation Unit, 2009: 65). Most projects had responded to the immediate needs of women affected by violence. These had realised numerous short-term

¹⁰⁴ See Majoor et al., 2013 and Taela and Ivens, 2014: 8.

¹⁰⁵ In the case of Sweden this has been in the areas of support to civil society and water resources; with Denmark on land rights, in the case of Oxfam Novib in relation to several projects on VAW.

¹⁰⁶ The Trust Fund was established in 1996 and until 2011 administered by UN Women's predecessor, UNIFEM.

¹⁰⁷ KST 119600B, 2008: 96 and KST 132821B, 2009: 113.

results, such as providing better access to services and increased knowledge and skills as well as awareness on VAW (UNIFEM Evaluation Unit, 2009: 70). However, despite increased awareness of the importance of targeting men as potential partners or active agents of change, projects often targeted women only (UNIFEM Evaluation Unit, 2009: 82).¹⁰⁸ There was also less evidence of outcomes and impact making it difficult to judge overall effectiveness. Two reasons for this were identified: (i) change is slow, even in the best of circumstances; and (ii) projects were not required to include a systematic approach for following up or validating that the needs of women were met' (UNIFEM Evaluation Unit, 2009: 70). Similar observations were made in an evaluation on the contribution of UN Women to prevent VAW of 2013: little was known of the *long-term* effects of interventions on the number and/or quality of services, or on their actual use by and benefits for survivors of VAW (UN Women, 2013: 22).¹⁰⁹

Both evaluations of 2009 and 2013 identified sustainability as a key issue for the Trust Fund. The 2009 evaluation found that grantees were not able to sustain the programmes that it co-financed after the funding ended, often due to limited resources (UNIFEM Evaluation Unit, 2009: 70, 102). The evaluation of 2013 observed in this respect that while the capacities of relevant national actors had been strengthened, capacity enhancement was often not institutionalised and 'little evidence of sustained capacity improvements' was found, in part due to the limited data on long-term and cumulative effects of efforts to build capacity (UN Women, 2013: 25). These findings are not too different from what was found in relation to the VAW-related projects financed under the MDG3 Fund and through Dutch NGOs, as is shown in the following paragraphs. One obvious reason is that at times the same organisations were financed.

4.5.2 Violence against women under the MDG3 Fund

Combating VAW was the focus of 80% of the projects financed under the MDG3 Fund. The evaluation of the Fund (IOB, 2015a) shows that three main types of interventions were used, sometimes in combination, i.e. (i) education and training, awareness raising, social dialogues and media campaigns to address social norms and attitudes; (ii) support for services for victims – including counselling and medical treatment and (iii) lobby and advocacy focused on the legal framework on VAW and its application.

In terms of immediate outputs, the evaluation shows that individual projects have trained variable numbers of volunteers and professionals to provide e.g. counselling, conflict mediation, and/or psychological support to a larger number of victims. Financial and/or

¹⁰⁸ An exception in this respect was the Breakthrough project in India that was also supported under the MDG3 Fund.

¹⁰⁹ While in 2010 the UN reported that the issue of M&E was picked up (United Nations, 2010: 9), the thematic evaluation of 2013 observed that '(existing) UN Women data provide either no or only very limited evidence of the long-term effects of individual initiatives, including their sustainability (e.g. in the case of piloted new services), uptake or positive effects on violence against women survivors. Reasons for this include the absence of baseline data and of on-going and long-term monitoring and/or rigorous evaluation, and that several initiatives reviewed were relatively new making it difficult to draw conclusions about long-term effects' (UN Women, 2013: 23).

legal support was also given to assist victims in putting claims at local courts. Lawyers, legal staff and/or members of the police were trained to improve legal services. National and international networking was part of the projects' approach.

Regarding results at outcome level, various MDG3 Fund projects have contributed to increased knowledge of VAW among the leadership of civil society and women's organisations and policy makers. The evaluation found that interventions dealing with the root causes of VAW and combining individual and community dialogues with intensive and longer-term multi-media campaigns were most effective in contributing to enhanced knowledge. However, little is known about the involvement of men in project activities and about changes in their behaviour.

At the same time, given the Fund's overall limitations in terms of M&E and the limited duration of the projects, there were few firm indications that this knowledge had indeed contributed to changes in attitudes or behaviour at the household or community level. The information available shows that although women were better armed with knowledge and confidence to claim their rights, they were often afraid to take action for fear of losing their reputation and of experiencing community backlash.

Institutional and financial sustainability of the organisations remained an issue. Projects focused on improving their service delivery capacity but there was little attention to their endogenous development. Effectiveness in this regard was hampered by a lack of clear strategies, a lack of mentoring or coaching, by supply-driven training, by the limited funding available and by the short duration of projects.

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The Fund has contributed to putting combating VAW on the political agenda. Still, there were not many indications of governments developing and/or enacting laws and providing adequate services for survivors of violence. In many countries, projects were frequently confronted with a lack of Government responsiveness – despite their obligations under international law. Still, projects had done little to strengthen this responsiveness and to improve the delivery of services by government institutions.

4.5.3 Violence against women – experiences of Dutch civil society

A review of close to 20 evaluation reports of Dutch civil society organisations¹¹⁰ that received government funding during the evaluation period shows that women's organisations were supported at grassroots level, through training and strengthening of their support services. This was often combined with awareness raising and lobby and advocacy activities aimed at changing perceptions on VAW and influencing government policies and legislation. Also in this case, national and international networking featured among the projects. The evaluations report the following results:

¹¹⁰ Although more evaluation reports were available, only those reports of sufficient quality were assessed.

- Changes in legal frameworks and policies¹¹¹ and increased coverage of VAW in the media;
- Improved knowledge on human rights in general and VAW in particular, together with improved skills among women and, to a lesser extent, men;
- Increasing numbers of women using services for survivors of VAW; and
- Improved self-esteem among targeted women – contributing to more women speaking out against violence and organising themselves, and more women reporting incidents of violence to the police.

The evaluations do not report on whether the interventions have actually resulted in changes in patterns, intensity and occurrence of VAW or whether related statistics have changed as a result of project interventions. At the same time they demonstrate that for changes to occur at this level, it is important to address the underlying causes of VAW, using context-specific approaches and making long-term investments beyond the lifetime of the individual project or programme.

4.5.4 Addressing violence against women within the framework of bilateral aid

In the evaluation period, the Netherlands has financed projects in the area of VAW in countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Russia and Yemen. By and large, these interventions dealt with support for victims of (domestic) violence, awareness raising and training on female genital mutilation, forced marriages, as well as legal reforms on VAW. The following paragraphs focus on results reported with respect to the Human Rights Fund and bilateral projects in Bangladesh and Mozambique.

Violence against women under the Human Rights Fund

IOB's evaluation of 2012 of Dutch support to human rights projects shows that out of 468 projects financed in the period 2007-2010, 79 (17%) focused on women's rights. With a budget of EUR 27.4 million, they represented 18% of a total of EUR 153 million. These, often small, projects, had achieved their planned outputs in terms of e.g. numbers of training participants and numbers of women reached. However, with some exceptions, it remained difficult to demonstrate whether the desired outcomes had been achieved, partly because of the difficult conditions in which the projects operated (e.g. Afghanistan). On the human trafficking projects in Kazakhstan and Nigeria, the evaluation finds that 'assistance was provided for victims, but the numbers were rather low, given the scope of the problem and the considerable budget involved' (IOB, 2012a: 74).

Violence against women and Dutch bilateral projects in Bangladesh and Mozambique

Combating VAW has been a priority of the Dutch development programmes in Bangladesh and Mozambique. Support was provided to several organisations that work in this domain and undertake awareness raising, provide services to survivors of violence, and support government services that deal with VAW.

¹¹¹ Examples mentioned concern e.g. the adoption of the National Plan for Violence Against Women 2009-2014 in Peru, the Comprehensive Law against Violence toward Women (Law 779) in Nicaragua and the Law Against Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women in Guatemala (2008).

In the case of *Bangladesh* these projects (see table 4.3) were implemented in a context of a high incidence of violence affecting close to 90% of the country's women: Bangladesh has the second-worst record in the world for VAW and has the highest incidence of acid attacks against women. Women rarely report such violence; social stigma in the community, weak implementation of legal procedures and ineffective, improper investigation by the police and low conviction rates in court are the main reasons. This has been changing slowly in recent years: a Family Violence Act was introduced in 2010 followed by an improved Women Development Policy in 2011. The Ministry of Women and Child Affairs has also set up *One-stop Crisis Centres* to deal with survivors of violence.

Table 4.3 Projects and organisations working on VAW in Bangladesh supported by the Netherlands		
Gender Responsive Community Based Policing ¹¹²	Acid Survivors Fund (ASF)	Legal education and gender aware leadership programme (Legal-II) project
This project implemented by the German International Cooperation (GIZ), aimed to (i) enhance community safety, especially for women and girls; (ii) contribute to a more professional, gender responsive and accountable police force that works in partnership with the population especially on VAW; and (iii) improve awareness and capacity of the population to react on crime. The Dutch contribution was EUR 2.3 million in the period 2007-2010.	The ASF, established in 1999, provides medical, psychological and legal assistance to acid survivors (including surgery), helps their social and economic reintegration, supports victims in getting legal justice and undertakes research, advocacy and prevention programmes. The Fund operates from Dhaka but works through a network of partner organisations. It trains partners to undertake local advocacy, to provide counselling and mediation and to lend support to acid and burn victims. In turn, these partners train community volunteers to support the reintegration of survivors and to give legal support. The ASF received some EUR 1.3 million between 2004-2010.	Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Services (RDRS) is a local NGO that is active in the northwest of the country. The project aimed to work towards the elimination of gender-based violence and the promotion and protection of women's rights and leadership. The project budget was EUR 710,000 for the period 2006-2011.

In *Mozambique*, measures related to VAW are incorporated in e.g. the National Plan for the Advancement of Women (2007) and the *Lei Sobre a Violência Doméstica Praticada Contra a Mulher* (Law Regarding Domestic Violence Practiced against Women, 2009) that prohibits VAW and marital rape. Though legislation is in place, it is not effectively enforced. Domestic violence remains widespread and continues to be justified – also by women. The rates of intimate and non-partners violence are higher in Mozambique than in other Sub-Saharan Africa countries. As in Bangladesh, domestic violence is rarely reported though this has seen an increase in recent years. The police force has introduced special women's and children's units to register cases and provide assistance to victims and their families. Resources are, however, limited. Table 4.4 gives a summary of the organisations supported by the Netherlands.

¹¹² This is defined as a partnership approach between police and the public built on respect of local diversity and context using mechanisms that ensure crime prevention and control mechanisms.

Table 4.4 Projects and organisations working on VAW in Mozambique supported by the Netherlands		
N'weti	Women and Law in Southern Africa Research and Education Trust (WLSA)	NAFEZA
N'weti is a Mozambican health communication organisation. It develops and undertakes multi-media health and development communication interventions, particularly in the areas of child abuse, VAW, SRHR, and HIV/AIDS since 2006. Dutch support equalled EUR 2.6 million up to 2014 for N'weti's campaign against domestic violence.	WLSA is an NGO that works in the area of women's rights in general and gender based violence in particular. Dutch funding equalled EUR 1.2 million for the period 2006-2013. Since 2008, support has been earmarked for WLSA's work on VAW and covers the costs of e.g. training materials and communication materials for civic education	NAFEZA is a network organisation that operates in several districts of <i>Zambézia</i> province. Its interventions focus on prevention, support to victims and increasing access to justice for survivors. Dutch support was some EUR 630,000 in the period 2009-2013.

Information on outcomes of the projects described above is not abundant. Often, M&E systems of the organisations supported do not allow for clear assessments of the projects' effectiveness in terms of numbers of people reached and changes brought about, as was the case for NAFEZA in Mozambique. It is also not possible to attribute changes to Dutch support – e.g. with respect to the Legal-II project where a similar project was also active in the project area. However, the evaluation can conclude that the projects described above have contributed to:

- *Better knowledge of and awareness of VAW* and of related legal frameworks such as the *Lei sobre Violência Doméstica* 29/2009 (domestic violence law) of Mozambique in the case of N'weti. This was also reported in relation to the Legal-II and the Community Policing projects in Bangladesh. This awareness was stronger in areas where other initiatives (such as Oxfam's We Can campaign) were also present.
- *Increased awareness that VAW is not acceptable*. An impact evaluation of N'weti reported that that respondents exposed to N'weti's interventions were more likely to: (i) have experienced domestic physical and sexual violence and abuse, reflecting an increased awareness of such harmful practices and that these were found unacceptable and against the law; (ii) disagree with the statement that a woman should tolerate violence for family reasons; and (iii) do something to help end domestic violence in the community (especially among women) (Hutchinson et al., 2013). In the case of NAFEZA, this increased awareness translated in an increase in the number of cases reported by women and registered by the police – indicating a change in responsiveness on that side. Also the Community Policing project in Bangladesh reported a decrease in acceptance of VAW, especially among younger women, resulting in more cases reported to the police and going to court. Women were also taking a more active role in addressing problems at community level, especially around cases of VAW. In the case of ASF, a positive finding is that the actual number of acid attacks has declined from 333 in 2004 to 85 by 2013. This downward trend would not have been possible without ASF involvement.

- Changes in *government responsiveness and trust in the local police force* were reported in the case of the Community Policing project. While results varied in terms of improved police performance, the police were generally cooperative, increasingly aware of VAW as a serious social problem and of the importance of community policing. High turnover within the police force remained a problem. The Legal II project observed increased trust in the local authorities to handle VAW cases resulting in more cases resolved through mediation at this level. In the case of the Community Policing project, such mediation efforts were increasingly picked up by the Community Policing Forums (CPFs), though their performance varied.¹¹³ At the same time, because of lack of resources, local authorities faced difficulties in taking up their responsibilities and poor performance of the legal system was one of the weakest links within the system.

4.6 Conclusions and reflections

International agreements and conventions on human rights in general and women's rights in particular have been important points of reference for the Netherlands. The position in this respect has been consistent throughout the evaluation period. The Netherlands has also contributed to setting international norms through its resolutions on VAW that were adopted over the years at the level of the UN and at European level. These norms provided a basis for its interventions at the UN Security Council calling for attention to violence against women, its negotiations in other UN bodies, and during the Universal Periodic Reviews. The Netherlands has used the UPRs as a forum to also address women's rights in general and VAW in particular in over one-fifth of its recommendations. International norms have also featured in its bilateral political dialogues. Confirming the broader relevance of these norms, they were also used by national and international civil society organisations in their lobby and advocacy.

The Netherlands has also provided financial support to organisations that translate these international norms to VAW interventions at country level. It has done so through its contributions to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, the Dutch Human Rights Fund, a range of bilateral projects and the MDG3 Fund. Funds were channelled to national and international NGOs that give support to victims of (domestic) violence, undertake awareness raising and training and lobby and advocacy for legal reforms on VAW. In terms of approaches, some interventions have been in line with what is recommended in the international literature, especially when working with qualified civil society organisations, combining generic awareness raising and advocacy with the mobilisation of communities and seeking the involvement of government institutions mandated to deal with VAW.

¹¹³ Variation has been linked to the quality of the services of the implementing NGO and to the presence of other programmes on awareness raising and services on women rights and domestic violence at grass root level. The final evaluation indicates that close to 80% of CPFs were performing well to fair, had mediated conflicts and were active in multi-stakeholder consultations, and awareness raising activities and crime control at the local level (e.g. at schools and through local authorities).

On effectiveness, the information available indicates that various concrete outputs were realised, i.e. larger numbers of professionals and volunteers trained, more women (and to a considerably lesser extent men) reached through general awareness raising campaigns, or larger numbers of women provided with medical and other care and shelter, and more staff from relevant government services trained on VAW. The sources used for this evaluation furthermore point at changes like increased knowledge on VAW, increased awareness that VAW is not acceptable and what to do when it occurs, and more resources and better services made available to victims of violence. Contributions are also reported on the introduction of new legislation and/or policies on VAW or the improvement thereof.

However, much less is known about what happens next, i.e. about outcomes such as changes in behaviour and declines in the incidence of VAW. Partly this reflects the limited quality of M&E systems – a general problem identified in the international literature. Partly it relates to the fact that projects tend to last a maximum of three years whereas it takes many more years – if not decades – for such changes to occur. They require addressing deep-rooted social and cultural norms about what is ‘acceptable behaviour’. What is known in this respect suggests that Dutch support has contributed to women being better armed with knowledge and having (more) confidence to claim their rights, but often remaining afraid to take action for fear of losing reputation and fear of community backlash. This underlines the need for thorough situational and gender analysis and for ‘complex interventions’ that operate at different levels, involve different actors and challenge the prevailing gender norms.

Finally, a common finding is that institutional and financial sustainability of the organisations that were supported continues to be a problem since there is strong donor dependency. This reflects a lack of attention to the broader development of these organisations. All too often, the focus of support was limited to enhancing their capacity to deliver services.



5

Women, girls and education

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides information on the policies pursued by the Netherlands to increase girls' access to basic education until 2010, and the results that were accomplished. It focuses on basic education – with some attention paid to higher education in the concluding paragraphs. It captures the main findings of IOB evaluations, i.e. the policy review of the Dutch contribution to basic education 1999-2009 (2011) and the country (impact) evaluations done in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Uganda, and Zambia. It includes information on education initiatives of selected Dutch civil society organisations and those financed by the Netherlands through the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and UNICEF.

5.2 Women's right to education – the issues

There is a series of international conventions and agreements that emphasise women's right to education.¹¹⁴ First of all, women have a basic human right to be educated. Secondly, instrumental arguments have been used to underline the importance of women's education and literacy, i.e.:

- From an economic perspective, stating that women's education is 'probably the single most important policy instrument to increase agricultural productivity and reduce poverty' (Quisumbing and Meinzen-Dick, 2001).¹¹⁵
- From a health perspective, with women's education associated with improved health outcomes such as: improvements in women's general health status, in maternal health and mortality, in child immunisation and child and infant health and mortality, and in SRHR including HIV/AIDS infections and reductions in female genital mutilation and other types of violence (IOB, 2011e: 31-34).
- From a social perspective, i.e. the importance of women's education for reasons of family planning, delaying marriage, reducing family size, reducing risk behaviour and lowering fertility rates as well as for women's voice in the family and their participation in public life.

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At the same time, there is no evidence that educational expansion has reduced social and economic inequalities. Moreover, the benefits of education vary and are context-specific. They also depend on the quality of the education that is provided.

¹¹⁴ These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948; Article 10 of CEDAW (1979); the 1990 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 28 and 29); the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) which makes education 'a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace' and calls for 'measures to eliminate discrimination in education at all levels on the basis of gender'; Article III of the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All (2000) and the outcome document of the follow-up World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000 as well as MDG3 talking about eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015.

¹¹⁵ See also Croppenstedt et al., 2013: 23-24.

Looking at the state of affairs in different levels of education, IOB, 2015c shows that girls' enrolment in *primary education* has been on the rise and that by 2012, all developing regions have achieved, or were close to achieving, gender parity in primary education, though this varies across regions and countries. Nevertheless, girls account for 53% of all out-of-school children (some 61 million in 2010). What is more, girls from the poorest households continue to face the highest barriers to education: being poor, female, from an ethnic or religious minority, living in rural areas or in a (post-) conflict zone increases the probability that a child will be out of school or will leave school early. The gender gap in school enrolment widens in *secondary education* but varies once more across regions. Gender disparities associated with poverty and rural residency are furthermore larger: in the poorest households, about twice as many girls of secondary-school age are out of school compared to their wealthier peers. *Tertiary education* has seen a major increase in the number of female students enrolled – though still mainly in the humanities and social sciences. Women are still significantly underrepresented in science, technology and engineering. By 2012, the overall gender parity index in tertiary education was 98 but, again, with great variation across regions. In general, countries with lower levels of national wealth tend to have more men enrolled than women, while the opposite occurs in countries with higher average income. Tertiary education completion rates still tend to be lower among women. In terms of *literacy* however, rates continue to be considerably worse for women than for men: they have barely progressed and women account for almost two-thirds of the world's 774 million illiterate adults.

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Reasons for the failure to achieve gender parity in (basic) education (which includes both primary education and secondary education) are varied and context specific. They can be grouped into demand side issues (such as the direct costs of sending girls to school, demand for girls' labour in the household, socio-cultural norms and traditions (e.g. early marriage) and supply side issues (including the lack of accessible and safe school infrastructure and of qualified and committed (female) teachers, and gender stereotyping in curriculum and textbooks). To address these issues, a range of strategies has been implemented, including the abolition of school fees, introducing stipends, community sensitisation on the importance of girls' education, the recruitment of female teachers, the development of girl-friendly teaching and learning materials and building girl-friendly schools.

5.3 Dutch policies on education and gender

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' policy document '*Education: A basic human right*' of 1999 combined the notions of equal access to, equality within and equality through education.¹¹⁶ Addressing the above-mentioned issues women and girls face continued to have a prominent place on the Dutch aid agenda in subsequent years: basic education was seen as an

¹¹⁶ Reference was made in this respect to e.g. gender equality in teaching and learning materials (KST 32099, 1998: 17) and area in which collaboration was established with the Consultative Forum on Education for All, the Association for Development of Education in Africa and the Forum of African Women Educationalists.

important condition for getting both men and women out of poverty. Moreover, reducing the gender differences in basic and secondary education was one of the MDGs to which the Netherlands was committed (KST 77487-2, 2004: 65).¹¹⁷ The quality of education became a key issue in the Dutch education policy, with particular attention to training female teachers and developing more gender-sensitive curricula and teaching and learning materials.

Basic education became less of a priority from 2007 onwards and, especially, following a critical report on Dutch development cooperation by the *Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy* (WRR) (WRR, 2010) and in its wake the policy letter of November 2010 (*'Basisbriefontwikkelingssamenwerking'* KST 32500-V-15, 2010). While education did not disappear completely from the development agenda, it was given a supporting role in realising the objectives of the Dutch spearheads, i.e. agricultural training in support of food security, training technicians for water management (KST 32605-4, 2011: 28). Furthermore, support for basic education remained an option in fragile states – where it is much needed, especially for girls. As a member of the governing board of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the Netherlands would also continue drawing attention to gender in fragile states.¹¹⁸ At the same time, it agreed to continue support for higher education.

5.4 Results

Using the available evaluation material, the following paragraphs describe what is known of Dutch bilateral support for education, Dutch NGO support, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and girls' education, UNICEF programme 'Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition' and Dutch higher education programmes.

5.4.1 Bilateral support for education

In relation to gender, IOB's policy review of Dutch support to basic education (2011a) observed that '(in) all countries evaluated, girls' education did receive special attention, through dialogue with governments, support for targeted projects and use of disaggregated education data' (IOB, 2011a: 87). Targeted efforts to get more girls into school were supported. This included assistance for girls with special needs, for the mobilisation of community support for girls' education and for the recruitment of female teachers. Such efforts were supported in Bangladesh, through a programme with BRAC and the Government's Primary Education Support Programme, and in Zambia where funding was provided for a Government Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education and for the NGO 'Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia' which undertook various campaigns focusing on girls' education. In terms of results, to which the Netherlands has contributed as one of the key donors, the picture is as follows.

¹¹⁷ See also KST 84186, 2005: 88; KST 91585, 2005: 104; KST 99333_2, 2006: 67; KST 107845, 2007: 4-6; KST 119600B, 2008 and KST 32500-V-2, 2010: 65.

¹¹⁸ KST 33000-V-2, 2011: 62-63.

Enrolment rates, across the board, had improved, particularly in countries with low levels of enrolment at the start of the new Millennium. This was true for children from poorer families, children from rural areas and for children living in countries affected by conflict and emergencies, including girls. Gender parity was achieved for enrolment in primary education in Bolivia and Uganda. Still, while in [Bolivia](#) access to education improved, even in rural areas, gender barriers to education remained and net enrolment rates for boys stayed slightly above those for girls. Moreover, girls scored lower on exams than boys. The gender gap was the largest in the poorest departments and data aggregated at national level disguised 'differences in enrolment between girls and boys in specific population groups or geographical areas' (IOB, 2011e: 94).

In [Bangladesh](#), the net enrolment rate of girls exceeded that of boys, except in the richest quintile (IOB, 2011d: 18). This was attributed to: (a) the Government's 'affirmative action' policies and financial incentives, (b) educational and poverty alleviation programmes of NGOs; (c) increased importance attached in society to girls' education and (d) lower opportunity costs of sending girls to school, even among poor households (IOB, 2011d: 136, 151).

In [Zambia](#), gender equity was also within close reach, though with some variation across provinces and, in 2008, declining in the higher grades of primary education (IOB, 2008b: 13, 110). Budget support for increased pro-poor basic education expenditures, the advocacy work that was undertaken and the introduction of free primary education had contributed to a significant narrowing down of the gender gap.¹¹⁹ In line with the obstacles identified above, it was also found that, with few exceptions, gender parity in education was correlated with poverty levels and national figures 'on access to education mask inequalities at lower levels, where – among others – girls in rural areas (...) have less access to education and achieve worse results than others' (IOB, 2011a: 113, 127).

Drop-out rates, though hard to measure, remain a problem, particularly for children from poorer families. High drop-out rates may have economic causes (education costs such as uniforms, school materials, etc.) weighted against the low returns to education and the need for help with farm or household work. But they may also relate to distance to school in rural areas, and cultural practices like early marriages as was the case for girls in [Zambia](#) (IOB, 2008b: 90). In this case, girls continued to drop out of the school system in significantly greater numbers than boys and completion rates remained low (IOB, 2011f: 64, 65). Along the same lines, drop-out rates in [Uganda](#) were higher for girls than for boys (45% versus 35%): '(there) is a gender bias that works against the school attendance of girls' and '(the) practice of early marriage – especially in the northern, eastern and western regions – limits girls' opportunities to attend school' (IOB, 2008c: 84).¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ IOB, 2008b: 91; IOB, 2011f: 3 and IOB, 2011c: 57.

¹²⁰ Other important reasons were early pregnancy, family responsibilities or domestic duties, initiation rites, low levels of adult literacy, safety issues in rural areas. Furthermore, the cost factor explaining drop-out rates was more important for girls than for boys while violence in the north of Uganda had a devastating impact (IOB, 2008c: 94, 112; Sadev, 2010: 15-18).

Overall, access to high *quality* education remained a concern, especially for girls, though the situation varied across and within countries. Findings on completion rates of primary education and how girls fare in end-of-primary school exams are as follows. In *Bangladesh*, by 2009, girls did considerably better than boys in terms of completing primary education but did less well in the end-of-school examinations. One contributing factor in this respect was that only 37% of the girls received private tutoring compared to 47% of the boys (IOB, 2011d: 151, 167). In *Zambia* on the other hand, external aid and increasing domestic investments in education contributed to lower pupil-teacher, pupil-classroom and pupil-book ratios, despite the large increase in enrolment. The number of girls sitting for the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination increased by 88% between 2000 and 2010, resulting in an improvement in the ratio of female to male candidates (IOB, 2011f: 109). The pass rate for girls was higher than for boys (88% versus 81%) as a result of the government policy to encourage girls to enrol in grade 8 (IOB, 2011f: 84). The exam results for girls in maths and English were found to be ‘encouraging’. The case of *Uganda* demonstrated significant improvements in women’s literacy rates, with over 70% of girls between 15 and 19 years of age able to read (for boys this was 87%) (IOB, 2008c: 103).

5.4.2 Dutch NGO support to education

Various Dutch NGOs have played their part as well to increase girls’ enrolment, reduce their drop-out rates, and increase the gender balance of their partner countries’ teaching staff. In practice this translated into activities such as awareness raising among parents and traditional leaders, efforts to introduce a more girl-friendly curriculum and better sanitation for girls (IOB, 2011f: 42).¹²¹ Still, it was difficult to judge the attention paid to gender in NGO education projects and the results reported varied: (a) access had improved in some areas, but not in all and a continued effort was needed to reach children that were often not reached by the public education system, including girls and (b) there was little proof of the results of activities to increase the gender sensitivity of education institutions.

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5.4.3 Support for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and girls’ education

The Global Partnership for Education succeeded the Education For All-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) to which the Dutch contributed the equivalent of USD 608 million between 2002 and 2013.¹²² For the period 2012-2015, girls’ education was made the second strategic objective of the GPE. Data on the results of the EFA-FTI indicate that in a large number of countries, financing had stabilised or further increased girls’ enrolment in education, though performance was mixed and, at times (e.g. Central African Republic) seriously lagging behind or deteriorating. In countries like Ethiopia, Ghana and Mozambique, there had been a ‘dramatic’ increase in girls’ enrolment, while the percentage of girls repeating a grade in primary school had declined. Girls’ education furthermore featured in Education Sector Plans that were developed with EFA-FTI support. Also specific initiatives were financed, such as awareness raising to send girls to school, the provision of targeted financial support, the introduction of free education for girls, and the review of school curricula for gender stereotyping.

¹²¹ The systematic review of Birdthistle et al. (2011) was unable to come up with evidence of the impact of separate toilets for girls on their school enrolment and attendance as well as on their educational outcomes and health (Birdthistle et al., 2011: 3-4; 33).

¹²² This includes its contribution to all GPE related Trust Funds (GPE Fund, GPE Fund 2 (EC), Catalytic Trust Fund, Catalytic Trust Fund (EC-ACP), Catalytic Trust Fund 2, the Bank Netherlands Partnership Programme (BNPP), and Secretariat Trust Fund.

5.4.4 Support for girls' basic education in (post) conflict countries

The Netherlands agreed to finance the UNICEF 'Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition' programme from 2006 onwards. Over USD 200 million were allocated to this programme to 'put education in emergency and post-crisis transition countries on a viable path of sustainable progress toward quality basic education for all'.

Overall, Programme funds supported work in the neediest countries and addressed issues that largely reflect local needs. A progress evaluation of December 2010 is however rather critical about the Programme's gender responsiveness: '(while) gender is perceived to be a cross-cutting issue...its integration into education programmes is uneven' and, at times there is 'a gap between the presence of gender in programme design and its impact on day-to-day life in schools' (UNICEF Evaluation Office, 2010: 8). Moreover, there were few programmes specifically targeting girls and 'a gender dimension was not consistently reflected in the implementation of interventions' (UNICEF Evaluation Office, 2010: 76). Positive judgements concern case studies conducted in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, more critical ones relate to Angola, Colombia, DRC, and Mozambique.

The Netherlands currently supports UNICEF's follow-up programme with EUR 150 million for the period 2012 to mid-2016 under the spearhead security and rule of law (see text box 5.1).¹²³

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Text box 5.1 UNICEF Programme Learning for Peace

The Learning for Peace – Peace-building, Education and Advocacy in Conflict-affected Context – programme focuses on five outcomes, i.e.: (i) increase inclusion of education into peacebuilding and conflict reduction policies, analyses and implementation; (ii) increase institutional capacities to supply conflict-sensitive education; (iii) increase the capacities of children, parents, teachers and other duty bearers to prevent, reduce and cope with conflict and promote peace; (iv) increase access to quality and relevant conflict-sensitive education that contributes to peace; and (v) contribute to the generation and use of evidence and knowledge in policies and programming related to education, conflict and peacebuilding. It covers countries like Burundi, DRC, Ethiopia, the Palestinian Territories, South Sudan, Uganda and Yemen. With respect to women and girls, programme documentation refers to their inclusion in consultative processes, their equal representation in the restoration and delivery of education and mainstreaming gender as a cross-cutting issue in all research areas and initiatives. An evaluation of the programme is on-going.

¹²³ The assessment memorandum justified this in the following terms: the Programme uses education as an instrument to promote peacebuilding to improve human security, aims to address the causes of conflict by improving access to education for specific groups of children (peace dividend) and increasing government capacity to provide conflict-sensitive education, and by enhancing the capacities of children, parents, teachers and members of the community to prevent and reduce conflict and promote peace.

5.4.5 Gender/women in Dutch higher education programmes

For many years, the Netherlands has been funding the Netherlands Fellowship Programme (NFP) and programmes to support the development of higher education. The most recent ones are the Netherlands Programme for Institutional Strengthening of Post-secondary Education and Training Capacity (NPT) and the Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher Education (NICHE). The NFP finances fellowships to enable people from a broad range of developing countries to participate in short courses, master programmes and PhD studies at Dutch higher education institutes. NPT and NICHE aim to strengthen post-secondary education and training capacity in Dutch aid partner countries. They finance projects in areas like curriculum development, staff training, and improvement of teaching and learning infrastructure. The NICHE programme's specific objectives talk amongst others about reducing 'gender discrepancies in the post-secondary higher education system' and addressing the specific capacity building needs in higher education to address the different needs of women and men.

Evaluations of these programmes were carried out in 2012. The NFP evaluation shows that over the period 2003-2010 in total 47% of the NFP grants were awarded to women (ECORYS, 2012). While in the early years, women were under-represented, they were in the majority (52%) by 2010, although there are large differences in the share of female fellows per country. The evaluation furthermore highlighted that: (a) women performed slightly better than men in completing the NFP training or education; and (b) NFP is valued by both employers and alumni for providing equal opportunities to the population in rural areas and women. The evaluation does not provide details on what happened to the female alumni after their return back home. Nor does it dwell on the issue of gender, but it does recognise that gender equity is more than talking about numbers of women included. The evaluation of NPT and NICHE (Ramboll, 2012) found that while gender equality received more attention in project design, this primarily reflected Dutch policies: it was not the most pressing concern for the institutions in the South. The evaluation refers to partial gender mainstreaming in a series of organisations supported under the NPT and the mainstreaming of gender in the curricula of close to 15% of the programmes that were developed with NPT funding. NPT finances had helped to finance two specific gender projects, develop six gender strategies, implement five gender workshops, establish a gender and HIV/AIDS unit in one institution and, in the case of Vietnam, had helped to influence drafting the new Vietnamese law on gender equality.

5.5 Conclusions and reflections

The Netherlands has been a strong supporter of increasing access to and improving the quality of basic education in countries where girls' school enrolment was seriously lagging behind. It has used both rights-based and instrumental arguments, backed by extensive literature, to justify this. The relevance of this support is underscored in the international literature and was reconfirmed in this evaluation.

The Netherlands has been relatively successful in taking on board the concerns of women and girls in its support of (basic) education – and in making sure that the programmes it has co-financed did so as well. In this respect, the literature demonstrates that its performance has been no different from that of other donors: education has traditionally been one of the sectors in which gender was mainstreamed more successfully.

Together with other donors and local governments, the Netherlands contributed to increasing girls' enrolment in basic education and in terms of increasing numbers of girls remaining in and completing this education. Their performance has improved as well. This is also true for the support channelled through the Education for All Fast Track Initiative and, to a certain extent, for NGO support to education. The support was therefore effective, even though girls from poorer families in rural areas and (post-) conflict countries still have less chance of entering and completing education and quality of the education provision remains limited. It is in this respect unfortunate that UNICEF's 'Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition' programme paid less attention to gender issues than expected; this is more the case for its ongoing Learning for Peace programme.

Looking at the theoretical underpinnings of the importance of basic education and the evaluation framework, it can be concluded that Dutch support to education is likely to have contributed to increased knowledge and skills. The same applies to the contribution of the Netherlands Fellowship Programme, which has given substantial numbers of women access to higher education. Although evaluations did not assess the other dimensions of power such as improved self-confidence and increased decision-taking power, based on the theory it is expected that in the longer term a contribution will also be made to these dimensions of empowerment.

With respect to higher education it is not possible to draw similar conclusions. For example in the NFP, in line with the programme's aim, women accounted for close to 50% of all grantees, though this varied countries. However, little is known about what happened after the return of the alumni. The evaluation of the Dutch post-secondary education programmes is limited to information on gender mainstreaming and what the immediate outputs were. At the same time it shows that while in project design more attention was paid to gender equality, this primarily reflected Dutch policies: it was not the most pressing concern for the higher education institutions in the South.



6

Women as economic actors

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the relationship between women and economic development, a topic that has been high on the Dutch development agenda throughout the evaluation period. The chapter starts with a description of issues surrounding the notion of women as economic actors and an explanation of Dutch policies. This is followed by information on what is known of the results of the main interventions financed in the five clusters that make up the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' private sector development programme: infrastructure, financial services, knowledge and skills, market access and development and laws and regulations.

6.2 Women as economic actors – the issues

Already back in 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) underlined that discrimination against women 'is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity'. Women's economic rights are also specified in six of the strategic objectives of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, and at the Millennium Development Goals Summit (2010) numerous UN member states called for equal access of women and girls to economic opportunities and decision making. They stressed that 'investing in women and girls has a multiplier effect on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth'.¹²⁴ There are also several ILO Conventions that promote women's rights in employment or deal with issues that working women are confronted with. Examples are the conventions on Maternity Protection (2000) and Decent Work for Domestic Workers (2011).

The literature reviewed within the framework of this evaluation confirms that there is indeed a 'business case' for ensuring women's economic participation – apart from a rights or equality-focused perspective.¹²⁵ There is ample evidence that when women are able to develop their full labour market potential, there can be significant macroeconomic gains, also in developing countries. As IOB (2015c) shows, studies find for example that: (i) women make a major contribution to economic welfare through large amounts of unpaid and often unseen work; (ii) that persistent gender inequality accounts for some 16% of the difference in per capita income between South Asia and East Asia and the Pacific; and (iii) that gender inequality 'plays a significant role in accounting for the poor growth performance in Africa' (Blackden et al., 2006: 1, 6). Still, this 'business case' has not meant that OECD/DAC members or the World Bank have given women's rights and gender equality the same attention in economic and productive sectors as in other sectors.

¹²⁴ Draft resolution referred to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly by the General Assembly at its 64th session: *Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals* (United Nations, General Assembly, 17 September 2010).

¹²⁵ A similar business case is used for investing in women and girls in agricultural development in e.g. DFID, 2014a: 9.

The literature also shows that progress in closing the gender gap in economic participation is slow. Overall, women's labour force participation has stagnated over the last two decades at some 55%, with considerable variation across regions and countries (World Bank, 2013: 1). Moreover, as IOB (2015c) demonstrates, if and when women do have paid work, they are generally worse off than men. The fact that gains in women's economic opportunities continue to lag behind their capabilities is according to the World Bank, *not* 'smart economics'.

What is more, the evidence that gender equality, particularly in education and employment, contributes to economic growth is far more consistent and robust than the evidence that economic growth contributes to gender equality in health, wellbeing and rights (World Bank, 2007: 107). The link between gender equality and economic growth is a complex one and asymmetrical. In itself, economic development 'is not enough to bring about complete equality between men and women' in the foreseeable future and 'policies will be required to accelerate this process'.¹²⁶ Whether employment outside the agricultural sector increases women's agency depends on what kind of employment opportunities are available to them, as is shown by e.g. Kabeer's research in Bangladesh (IOB, 2015c: 45). Another issue is that women's participation in the labour market has not been accompanied by changes in the gender division of unpaid labour at the home front: women continue taking care of children and the elderly, and continue performing domestic activities such as food production and the collection of fuel wood and water.

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The picture of what works, where, how and under what conditions is at the same time far from clear and what works in one setting may not work in another. As observed by ODI, the literature on economic empowerment 'is narrowly focused on direct outcomes of women's economic participation rather than their broader empowerment impact'. It rarely explores 'how women's diverse characteristics, identity and experiences account for differential empowerment outcomes' and fails to 'account for differences in context when presenting their results, which may explain some of the ambiguous and inconclusive findings' (Domingo et al., 2015: 61). IOB's literature review (IOB, 2015c) summarises what potentially works for women running small-scale enterprises under what conditions and for which groups, emphasising that 'the same class of interventions (has) significantly different outcomes depending on the client or beneficiary'. The literature review moreover finds controversial and inconclusive findings with respect to initiatives taken to overcome the constraints women face in getting access to credit (IOB, 2015c: 45-47).

¹²⁶ Dufló, 2012: 1556, 1063; World Bank, 2014: 181-183. The World Bank observes furthermore that '(the) overall evidence from different types of data and empirical analyses supports the conclusion that economic development provides an enabling environment for gender equality—though its effects are not immediate or without costs, at least in the short run' (World Bank, 2014: 202-203). The literature on this issue shows diverging opinions. As mentioned in IOB (2015c), some sources argue that in the long-term, women's employment has the potential to increase women's assets, to shift the balance of power within the family, to lead to their greater independence in household decision making and greater investments in the health and education of their children.

6.3 Dutch policies on the economic role of women

For many years, the policies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have highlighted the important role of women in specific economic sectors – including the spearhead of food security that is addressed in the next chapter.¹²⁷ In this economic domain, the Ministry's approach is characterised by the two-track approach of gender mainstreaming and stand-alone initiatives targeting women. Important funding schemes to operationalise this stand-alone track were the MDG3 Fund and its successor FLOW, which were designed to promote, amongst others, initiatives in the areas of property and inheritance rights and women's employment and equal rights on the labour market. Another characteristic of the policy on women's economic participation has been the combination of a rights-based perspective and instrumental arguments:

- a *rights-based perspective* – it was unjustified that, in comparison with men, women had less access to own land, harness the power of their production through capital and financial services, technology, and markets, while taking the brunt of food production and the provision of water and energy sources for the household. The Netherlands aimed for equal treatment of women and girls on access to these resources.¹²⁸ This rights-based perspective has been combined with attention to corporate social responsibility and ILO's decent work agenda,¹²⁹ albeit with ups and downs. For example, the policy note on corporate social responsibility of 2012 does not refer specifically to women or gender (KST 26485-164, 2012).¹³⁰ The situation is different for the *National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights* of 2013.¹³¹ This particular Plan states that it should be implemented in a non-discriminatory manner, with 'particular attention to the rights, needs as well as problems for (population) groups that run an additional risk to end up in a vulnerable or marginal position, and taking into account the diverse risks for women and men' (KST 26485-174, 2013: 49; 73).¹³²

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¹²⁷ See e.g. KST 40036, 1999: 21; KST 77594, 2004: 4; and KST 33625-5, 2013: 16.

¹²⁸ See e.g. KST 118293, 2008: 8; KST 122477, 2008 and KST 32605-54, 2011: 3. Difficulties women experienced in these areas would also be addressed in the policy dialogue with the Dutch aid partner countries.

¹²⁹ This agenda is also about (sexual) violence and intimidation on the work floor, equal rights and equal pay for women and incorporating a gender dimension in all of ILO's working areas (employment, labour conditions, social security and social dialogue). The importance of access to work against a fair wage, under decent circumstances with equal opportunities for women and men was reconfirmed in 2014.

¹³⁰ However, it does refer to the state of affairs in the textile industry in Bangladesh – which employs thousands of women, often in bad working conditions, against low pay and facing unacceptable risks to their security and well-being (KST 26475-164, 2012: 4). It also refers to the responsibility of the Dutch government and the Dutch textile sector in implementing OECD guidelines for multinational firms.

¹³¹ The policy note was prepared to make the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human rights of 2011 operational. These principles confirm: the *State Duty to Protect*, the *Business Responsibility to Respect* and the need to provide effective measures for recovery and/or restore breaches to this (Access to Remedy).

¹³² Moreover, the Plan states that to support business in respecting human rights, they should be advised on appropriate measures, including due diligence vis-à-vis human rights and on how to address issues of gender equality and issues of vulnerability and marginalisation of different groups, including women (KST 26485-174, 2013: 54).

- *instrumentalist* arguments, with the World Bank's notion of 'smart economics' introduced from 2011 onwards. The assumption is that investing in women gives double dividend: women are more likely to invest their income in their family and community and thus contribute simultaneously to economic growth and reducing illiteracy, illness and early death.

The Dutch policy note of January 2010 titled '*Growth, Poverty and Inequalities*' (KST 140221, 2010) united these two perspectives. It argued that steps towards reducing unequal access to the means of production would enhance women's opportunities to participate in the formal economy, stimulate and diversify more sustainable and pro-poor growth and contribute to (gender) equality and poverty reduction.¹³³ One year later, attention to gender or women nevertheless was absent from the policy letter on development of the private sector in developing countries (KST B32605-56, 2011). It made a return in 2012, when Parliament was informed that the private sector programmes were adapted to make them more accessible to women entrepreneurs (KST 32605-114, 2012: 5). In addition the policy note *A World to Gain* (2013) announced that the Dutch private sector development policy would pay special attention to vulnerable groups such as small farmers and producers, minorities, youth and women. The entire private sector development programme would be guided by the principle of inclusivity and women entrepreneurs were an important target group. Development and poverty criteria were to be incorporated on e.g. the participation of women and/or their access to infrastructure, energy and financial services when assessing proposals for these different programmes and for public-private partnerships. This also concerned the Facility for Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Food Security (FDOV) and the cooperation with Agriterre.¹³⁴

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Similar statements were made regarding the Dutch Good Growth Fund¹³⁵: special attention should be paid to women entrepreneurs in view of their contribution to development on the one hand and their difficulties in getting access to capital on the other. Gender was among the criteria on which project applications would be assessed, although no targets were set. Instead, the outcomes of a mid-term review of the Fund would permit a judgment on whether sufficient women entrepreneurs were able to use it, what obstacles they faced and what had to be done to improve on this aspect.

Recent Ministry documents also suggest that female entrepreneurship, vocational education for women, as well as inclusive finance that is accessible to women are seen as key elements for inclusive economic growth.¹³⁶ Gender is also to be kept on the agenda of the multilateral

¹³³ KST 140221, 2010: 12, 14-15, 34-35, 47.

¹³⁴ KST 31250-97, 2012: 4; KST 33625-5, 2013: 16 and KST 33625-38, 2013: 19. The facility specifically asks for proposals that support women entrepreneurs, while under the heading of food security the impact on the position of women is to be assessed (KST 34000-XVII, 2014).

¹³⁵ See KST 33625-35, 2013: 17; KST 33625-38, 2013: 16, 19, 29; KST 33625-44, 2013: 13 and KST 33625-70, 2013: 23, 25.

¹³⁶ Other elements are regional economic integration, sustainable production and supply chains, inclusive financing, good economic governance, and international corporate social responsibility.

initiatives that the Netherlands co-finance. However, given its comparatively small contribution, it is noted that Dutch influence is often limited.¹³⁷

6.4 Results

IOB's policy evaluation on private sector development shows that, with few exceptions, evaluations of Dutch (co) financed private sector development programmes do not report on outcomes for final target groups or deal with issues like income improvement, poverty alleviation and economic growth (IOB, 2014b: 25-27; 184). If they do, it is usually not on the basis of systematic research that allows for attributing the changes observed to these interventions. Against this background, it is not surprising that, in most cases, reporting on the results for women faces even bigger constraints. The following paragraphs summarise what is known of the results of the five central clusters of the Dutch private sector development programmes. Existing evaluations are the main sources of information.

6.4.1 Infrastructure

With a budget of EUR 789 million for the period 2005-2012, the ORET programme¹³⁸ provided support for the development of water and sanitation, energy, health infrastructure and transport infrastructure projects in developing countries. The only requirement was that projects were not to have any negative consequences for women ('do no harm'). IOB's private sector evaluation provides a critical assessment of the contribution of ORET to employment creation and sustainable poverty alleviation (IOB, 2014b: 64-65; 107-108; 113). An evaluation of ORET in 2006 indicated that out of 50 projects studied, seven had had a positive impact on women and eleven had increased women's opportunities for employment and income generation and/or access to infrastructure and social services, either directly and/or indirectly (Berenschot et al., 2006: 53-54). The evaluation on ORET in China was less positive: while projects had indeed done no harm, the programme had not 'promoted the development of women to a great extent' (NCSTE/IOB, 2006: 85, 142).

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¹³⁷ An example is the Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility (PPIAF), a multi-donor trust fund that gives technical assistance for establishing a private-sector conducive enabling environment. A strategic review of this Facility was done in 2009. The Annexes state: 'Unrealistic social, environmental and gender requirements, far in excess of those required in the developed world, have arguably distorted and delayed donor investment and lending decisions. This has led to frustration on the part of some governments and a greater temptation to respond favourably to unsolicited approaches from, for instance, companies from developing countries who are less concerned about such issues' (Cambridge Economic Policy Associates Ltd, 2009: 16-17).

¹³⁸ ORET refers to 'Ontwikkelingsrelevante Exporttransacties' i.e. Development-Related Export Transactions. The ORIO (Ontwikkelingsrelevante Infrastructuurontwikkeling) programme succeeded ORET in 2009 with a budget of EUR 559 million for the period 2009-2013. Gender is part of the sustainability assessment and 'gender development impact' became one of the criteria on which applications were to be assessed (AgentschapNL Policy Rules for the ORIO Grant Facility: 26, 13). The final report on a review of ORIO of October 2013 demonstrates that a regular evaluation of results, let alone impact, was not yet possible (Carnegie Consult, 2013: 3). An impact assessment is foreseen for 2018.

A forthcoming IOB evaluation of ORET (IOB, 2015d) demonstrates that the earlier requirement of the ORET regulation that transactions should do ‘no harm to the position of the poor and women’ was abolished in 2006. What is more, mandatory feasibility studies and the assessment of ORET’s administrator of applications had to provide information on the expected contribution to the creation of sustainable employment in the developing country and the impact on the poor and women. On the basis of a series of case studies, the evaluation finds that projects had in general a neutral effect on the position of the poor or women. Nevertheless, in some cases direct benefits for women were observed, either as a result of explicit design or because of happy coincidence. Examples of this positive bias towards the poor and women are:

- The drinking water projects (easier access to cheaper and safe drinking water) and the provision of buses in Ghana (with better, cheaper and safer intercity and rural transportation providing more opportunities for women to go to work and to sell their produce on regional markets);
- The supply of diagnostic equipment to hospitals in Tanzania (partly focused on diagnostic services to pregnant women); and
- Improved vocational training facilities in Sri Lanka (attracting more female students).

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Another noteworthy infrastructure programme is the LDC Infrastructure Development Fund, which was set up in 2001. The LDC had a budget of EUR 182 million for the period 2005-2012 to finance projects in e.g. energy, water, roads and agricultural infrastructure, in least developed countries. The evaluation of the Fund of 2009 (IOB, 2009b) concluded that just over 50% of the projects had seen a high impact, especially those in water and sanitation but contains little reference to women.¹³⁹

Finally, in the period 2003-2013, the Netherlands also contributed EUR 52 million to the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG). Its aim was to improve infrastructural services in LDCs by stimulating socially responsible private sector participation in infrastructure projects. A study of 2012 indicates that ‘(independent) reviews of the various (PIDG) facilities and the PIDG programme as a whole, have found limited coverage of gender issues, despite this being a focus area for several PIDG members (IMC Worldwide, 2012: 3), including the Netherlands.’¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Reference is only made to the case of South Africa, where adult women preferred to continue using traditional pumps rather than the pumps established with Dutch funding (IOB, 2009b: 72). An FMO impact assessment report of 2010 indicates that through the Fund 49,000 jobs had been created up to the end of 2009, of which 3,600 for women (7%).

¹⁴⁰ See also DFID, 2013b: 82. In response, PIDG management decided to undertake two studies, i.e. a study on how PIDG can better monitor and measure impacts of PIDG-supported projects on women, plus a systematic review of wider academic (impact related) literature on women and infrastructure (IFC, 2012).

6.4.2 Financial sector

The *Micro & Small Enterprise Fund* (MASSIF) is run by FMO and spent some EUR 285 million between 2005 and 2012. It focused on strengthening financial intermediaries that provide credits to small and medium-sized enterprises and low-income households in developing countries. Although MASSIF itself would have no direct impact on the position of women, these intermediaries could have an impact by increasing access of women to financial services, especially those in small and medium-sized enterprises. As IOB (2014b) shows, no impact evaluation was undertaken to date. Since baseline data and information on clients served were not available, making it difficult to determine impact, an evaluation done in 2010 focused on management issues alone. This evaluation signalled that MASSIF project evaluations paid little interest to the social performance of its clients, including gender issues. The evaluation states that the discussion on gender is a concrete example where FMO according to the Ministry is insufficiently responsive (Carnegie Consult, 2010: 122).¹⁴¹

The *Health Insurance Fund*, with a budget of some EUR 130 million for the period 2006-2016, supported the implementation of a health insurance concept whereby low-income groups can insure themselves for medical expenses including aids blockers. The programme started in Nigeria, and was subsequently taken up in Tanzania. An AIID impact evaluation (2013) showed that the highest take-up of the insurance was among women aged 18 to 29. However, when looking at impact on health care access and utilisation, financial protection and health status, little gender-specific information is provided apart from the observation that 70% of the health visits in the period 2007-2011 were made by women and children (AIID, 2013: 12).

A more recent initiative is a public private partnership (PPP) on financial inclusion, promoting private sector development and food security together with Rabo Development. Both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Rabo Development contribute EUR 10 million to the project that lasts from 2013 to 2018 and aims to improve access to financial services in rural areas. The focus is on private consumers with limited or no access to these services and small and medium enterprises in the food and agriculture sector, run by farmers (men and women) and cooperatives. The proposal acknowledges both the role women play in economic and social development and the constraints they face in getting access to financial services. Each bank to be supported 'has or will develop a strong focus on inclusive rural finance, including women's access to financial services' (Rabo Development, 2013: 6). Along these lines, the Ministry asked Rabo Development to include a gender analysis for every bank proposed and to include gender specific results indicators. Nevertheless, neither of the two proposals approved to date (Vietnam and Zambia) mentions a gendered analysis of the specific issues women face in getting access to financial services, nor have they identified any gender-specific indicators.

¹⁴¹ FMO annual evaluation reports provide little information on realised social outcomes, gender or women, even though this is one of three indicators for measuring a project's development outcome (FMO Evaluation Unit, 2013: 8).

6.4.3 Knowledge and skills

The 'Programme for Cooperation with Emerging Markets' (PSOM) and the 'Private Sector Investment Programme' are part of the 'knowledge and skills' cluster of the Dutch PSD policy. Both aim at promoting sustainable investments and/or sustainable trade relations. The budget of PSOM equalled EUR 235 million for the period 2007-2013, whereas PSI has a budget of EUR 320 million for the years 2012-2020. Gender was one of the selection criteria for the individual projects that were implemented under these programmes, and attention was also to be paid to gender impact.

An evaluation of PSOM/PSI of 2010¹⁴² showed that around two-thirds of the evaluated projects had contributed to establishing economically healthy enterprises, increased employment (although this was mostly low-skilled manual work in industry or agriculture), innovation (new products and new technologies) and knowledge transfer. On average, roughly half of the jobs created was for women. Though this is not further defined, the evaluation indicates that job creation was an important driver for empowerment of young women in Ethiopia and Vietnam.

Besides these two programmes, there has also been a dedicated programme for funding missions of specialised Dutch managers to developing countries: the so-called PUM programme. PUM was endowed with a budget of EUR 38 million for 2008-2011 and EUR 47 million for the period 2012-2015. The programme supports individual small and medium scale enterprises through (voluntary) visits by managers. The focus is on companies that lack the financial means to attract advisory services (technical skills, marketing and management, financial management, etc.) on the market. Less than 10% of the 2,000 missions conducted each year are done by female experts and women are a minority among applicants for PUM support: with few exceptions companies supported are run by men. According to an evaluation of the PUM programme (Ecorys, 2010), supported companies had seen increased employment for women, though this concerned work that women traditionally performed (Ecorys, 2010: 84).

6.4.4 Market access and value chain development

The literature reviewed for this evaluation (IOB, 2015c) indicates that women's role in agricultural value chains¹⁴³ differs across commodities, contexts and time. At the same time, 'underlying patterns of asset ownership and control condition men's and women's ability to participate in and benefit from value chain projects' (Quisumbing et al., 2014: 2): women lack secure control over land, family labour and other resources required to guarantee a reliable flow of produce. Furthermore, supply chains may contribute to further gender inequality. Women generally have unstable, temporary, and often unskilled and more risky jobs that come with lower wages or are unpaid for so-called 'family work'. In addition, increases in cash income for men do not necessarily translate into gains for all household

¹⁴² Triodos Facet, 2010a and Triodos Facet, 2010b.

¹⁴³ 'A value chain refers to an entire system of production, processing and marketing from inception to the finished product. It consists of a series of **chain actors**, linked together by flows of products, finance, information and services. At each stage of the chain, the value of the product goes up because the product becomes more available or attractive to the consumer' (KIT et al., 2012: 5).

members.¹⁴⁴ These observations make it important to look ‘closely at gender relations and structural factors when pursuing value chain development’ (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2011: 36). More specifically, KIT et al. (2012) argue this importance from three main perspectives: rights and social justice, poverty reduction, and instrumental arguments: improving gender dynamics improves chain performance; and certification offers specific mechanisms that facilitate addressing gender’ (KIT et al., 2012: 257).

This evaluation has looked into the following programmes financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH) and the Farmer Support Programme (FSP) with Solidaridad. Recent evaluations of SNV support to value chains in Ethiopia and Tanzania, carried out as part of IOB’s mid-term review of SNV, were examined as well.

IDH

The initiative Sustainable Trade (IDH) was launched in 2008 with an initial budget of EUR 38 million; for the period 2008-2015, the total contribution from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is set at EUR 123 million (IOB, 2014c). IDH focuses on sustainable value chain development in various key sectors, in particular cocoa, tea, soy, natural stone, tropical hard wood, cotton, fish and tourism. IDH is active in over 50 countries, promotes the development of voluntary product standards and finances e.g. training activities, especially for small-scale producers to enable them to participate in these value chains. Desk review shows that reports on the cotton, tea, cocoa and coffee value chains vary in the attention paid to gender equality or the position of women.

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With respect to the *Better Cotton Initiative*, country evaluations on India, Mali and Pakistan have looked at gender in the assessment of the decent work agenda that was incorporated into this Initiative. They find that there is little evidence of any kind of gender focus in the approach of the implementing partner (Usher et al., 2013: 5; 37). Despite their involvement in cotton production as workers, few activities target women workers as beneficiaries¹⁴⁵, one argument being that they are difficult to reach because of the prevailing local cultural and social norms and because of low literacy levels. Outcomes for marginalised groups, including women, are even less evident, apart from successful efforts to restrict pregnant and lactating women from being involved in the spraying of chemicals in both India and Pakistan.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ At the same time ‘(there) is growing evidence that women working for exporters directly engaged with the value chain’s lead firms have better work conditions and greater wage equality than those who work on family holdings or for smaller, independent outgrowers’ (Staritz and Reis, 2013: 24).

¹⁴⁵ These small-scale activities concern e.g. the establishment of women-only learning groups in India, awareness raising on equal pay, training on safety at the work place, training on farm production (e.g. through self-help groups), organisation of micro-credit groups of women, training for off-farm employment (e.g. sewing, embroidery, arch work and beautician skills in Pakistan), and women’s leadership training, training of extension workers and radio broadcasts on *inter alia* women empowerment in Mali (see e.g. Majumdar, 2013: 16 and Usher et al., 2013: 37).

¹⁴⁶ On the importance of these initiatives see e.g. Meinzen-Dick et al., 2011: 26.

The situation with respect to the *Tea Improvement Programme* mirrors that of cotton: women play a role in tea production,¹⁴⁷ but their position is not a main priority and is definitely not always addressed in a comprehensive manner. Data on both Kenya and Malawi is limited to the share of female trainees in technical training (40%).¹⁴⁸ In Kenya, where collaboration was established with the government for the training of ‘gender committees’ on VAW and discrimination, women may also have benefited from the establishment of kitchen gardens.¹⁴⁹ A more elaborate and positive picture of the poverty impact of social and environmental voluntary standard systems in Kenyan tea – which also covers initiatives supported under the umbrella of IDH (Rainforest Alliance and Fair Trade) – is provided in text box 6.1.

Text box 6.1 *Women and tea value chains*

The report of Stathers and Gathuthi concludes that while there are still ‘serious gender inequality issues in smallholder tea farming, the increased profiling of women’s roles in tea farming, the insistence by the certification standards on women’s involvement in agricultural, household budget management and livelihood diversification training and some committees along with other contextual factors is said to be contributing to women’s empowerment’ (Stathers and Gathuthi, 2013: 89). This positive change is partially a result of the Fair Trade and Rainforest Alliance certification systems. The authors furthermore report the following findings:

- The promotion of initiatives to diversify income (such as food production) particularly benefited women.
- Income resulting from the Fair Trade premiums was also used for investments that saved women’s time, had positive impacts on maternal and child health, increased women’s safety, and permitted them to undertake income-generating or household activities. Moreover, investments in girls’ dormitories improved their personal security and study opportunities.

¹⁴⁷ E.g. in Kenya, while the man in the household is responsible for most activities with regard to tea production, he is usually the owner of the land and receives the income from tea production: ‘(in) about 40% of the households, the spouse shares the responsibility of management or supervision of work in the tea fields’ and ‘in more than 50% of the households, the spouse (who in about 80% of cases is a woman) shares the highest workload in tea plucking’ (Waarts et al., 2012: 32).

¹⁴⁸ At the same time, in both cases reference is made to the lack of (systematic) training records and lack of information on how many households had indeed be reached (Waarts et al., 2013a: 12, 73; Waarts et al., 2013b: 11; 84). The focus on women as trainees is a common phenomenon; however, ‘an increasing number of women participating in value chain-related activities does not necessarily entail that those participating improve their terms of participation and therefore their gains (particularly in male-dominated societies)’ (Riisgaard et al., 2010: 53).

¹⁴⁹ Waarts et al., 2012: 74. On the issue of women’s empowerment see also Coles et al., 2012: 27; 56.

- An increasing number of women got small areas of tea bushes to register in their own names. This resulted in an increase of women's membership of producer associations though overall 'women's ownership of tea is still limited' and women make up less than 30% of registered members. Moreover, 'fairly rigid gender norms' continue to be associated with most jobs on the estates and 'mechanisation is leading to a masculinization of the tea estate workforce'.
- Women increasingly participated in producer organisation collection centres and tea estate workers' committees though these meetings are still 'men's business'.
- Increased awareness about the dangers of women doing chemical spraying and increased knowledge among women of environmental and management issues as well as finance.
- Increased awareness 'about the importance of joint planning and decision making within households and the importance of household budgeting' (Stathers and Gathuthi, 2013: 48).
- Increased awareness among the tea workers of their rights – also among women (e.g. in relation to sexual harassment, with also a reduction in domestic violence reported as a result of the values promoted by the Rainforest Alliance).

On [Coffee](#), UTZ (2014) reports on similar findings with respect to the restrictions on pregnant women applying agro-chemicals as were found in relation to cotton and tea. Moreover, women attended farmer committees and councils more frequently and were more active in the discussions at such meetings.¹⁵⁰

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With respect to the [Cocoa Improvement Programme](#), the 2013 report on the 'IDH Cocoa Productivity and Quality Programme (CPQP) in Ivory Coast' concludes that the certification scheme underlying the Cocoa Productivity and Quality Programme in Ivory Coast 'has been inclusive, but female farm owners and workers are under-represented'.¹⁵¹ This is also the case in Ghana. The reason is that certification is implemented through registered members of a producer group who are generally men, even though women are heavily involved in cocoa farming activities and possibly 20% of the cocoa farmers is female. A key issue is that '(most) women in Ivory Coast, as in much of West Africa, are not land owners and thus do not have direct control of cash crops, including cocoa, and are not directly able to influence major household and economic decisions', even though this may be gradually changing (Waarts et al., 2013d: 22, 53).¹⁵² Nevertheless, women *do* benefit when income from cocoa increases. Among the wives of farmers participating in focus groups, about 65% indicated receiving a larger proportion of cocoa income and 4% had received land to grow cocoa. Another 10% reported not having seen important changes in their livelihoods, while about

¹⁵⁰ See Kasente, 2012: 113. In terms of challenges, reference is made 'indications that coffee-related labour demands at household level have started to go up for women and men while women's workloads have almost doubled because of their additional household chores. The quality of care for tending the coffee plant requires a much higher standard than farmers were used to, as did the rest of the production process' (Kasente, 2012: 125).

¹⁵¹ Waarts et al., 2013d: xi, 52-53, 56. On Ghana see also Dengerink, 2013: 16.

¹⁵² On this land issue see also McArdle and Thomas, 2012: 288.

25% indicated that there were no community programmes to support income generation activities for them (Waarts et al., 2013d: 22, 53).¹⁵³ KPMG's evaluation of the 2008-2012 Cocoa Improvement Programme furthermore refers to (a) the organisation of gender learning groups to train women on cocoa production and to improve their knowledge on social issues and (b) the training of 500 women in Ghana and Ivory Coast to raise their income by selling higher quality products (KPMG, 2013: 18, 25).

Solidaridad

The Farmer Support Programme (FSP) with Solidaridad runs from 2009 to 2015 and focuses on supporting and training smallholder farmers and producers to make their production of soy, palm oil, sugar cane, cotton and beef more sustainable. It includes training and other support to farmers and workers to improve productivity and reduce production costs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides EUR 29.5 million, the private sector another EUR 39 million. The FSP is implemented in 27 countries (including six (former) Dutch aid partner countries) together with producer organisations and international and Dutch companies. Where relevant, these partners are expected to identify and address gender issues in these value chains and to address the position of other marginalised and vulnerable groups. Support is also given to develop the necessary skills to implement policies in an area like gender.

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No evaluation of the programme is available to date. The annual reports for 2011 and 2012 have little to report on gender issues.¹⁵⁴ The reports on 2013 and 2014 provide some information on activities carried out for women (such as community level awareness raising on VAW, and women's leadership training) but little data is available on results.

SNV value chains in Ethiopia and Tanzania

Evaluations of the Dutch NGO SNV to support the development of fruit value chains in Ethiopia and edible oil value chains in Tanzania¹⁵⁵ show that gender aspects had played a role in the choice of these chains. In both cases, it concerned products that were traditionally cash crops for (poor) women. The evaluations found that:

- As fruits became cash crops in Ethiopia, control over the related income shifted from women to men (though less so for pineapple). The situation is different in Tanzania: for both crops women continue to play an important role in production and commercialisation decisions;
- In Ethiopia, though women participated in training, they were facing greater limitations in producing quality fruit¹⁵⁶;

¹⁵³ To counter this UTZ, some traders and their partners in Ivory Coast have started to focus more specifically on women in a number of training and empowerment activities on a small scale (Waarts et al., 2013d: 20).

¹⁵⁴ The report on 2011 does not go beyond acknowledging that 'market driven supply chain projects alone do not solve some of the more persistent social and ecological issues in countries of origin, such as freedom of organization, gender issues, deforestation and land rights conflicts' (Solidaridad, 2012: 5).

¹⁵⁵ ACE Europe, 2013a; ACE Europe, 2013b and IOB, 2013b.

¹⁵⁶ They were more likely to sell unripe fruit to cover immediate expenditures, more reluctant to replace trees because of loss of harvest, less access to tools and training was too complex at times.

- For women in Tanzania, increasing sesame growing was affected by (a) insufficient land as it was used by men to grow cashew as a cash crop and (b) the use of improved varieties of sunflower and sesame was too labour intensive;
- Comparatively few women were a member of cooperatives in Ethiopia but membership was on the rise in Tanzania following the introduction of small credit schemes.

6.4.5 Trade union support

Traditionally, the Dutch international trade union programmes, implemented by the Dutch trade unions CNV and FNV are expected to pay attention to women's rights. This is true for:

- The trade union programme of the years 2001-2008 calling for attention to women's participation in trade union structures since women were often in a subordinate position on the labour market and were not equally represented in the trade unions;
- The 2009-2012 policy framework for trade union cooperation that incorporates improving the position of women as one of the programme themes; and
- The current trade union co-financing programme (2013-2016) that includes 'gender' as one of six priority result areas. It includes support for women's participation in trade union leadership and policy making. The trade unions are also expected to improve women's access to the labour market, support their efforts for ensuring equal pay for equal work, and campaigns against sexual intimidation and domestic violence and in favour of collective labour agreements that ease the combination of work and reproductive tasks.

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The focus has been on improving the position of women, youth, children and those working in the informal economy in countries with (structural) violations of trade union and labour rights.¹⁵⁷

An IOB evaluation (IOB, 2008a) of the international trade union programme 2001-2008 concluded that the results in the area of gender were mixed: in some trade unions there was equal representation of women, in others this was lagging behind. Representation of women in trade union boards and organisations remained low and had hardly increased (IOB, 2008a: 127). Where there was increased representation of women, this hardly resulted in policies favouring women (IOB, 2008a: 15). An evaluation that focused on planning and M&E issues in relation to the programme for the period 2009-2012 (CDP, 2012) referred to the introduction of gender audits to measure the 'gender sensitivity' of CNV's partners, gender mainstreaming in Indonesia resulting in increased trade union membership and more women represented in middle management, and the identification of projects to address sexual violence in the workplace (CDP, 2012: 44-47). The report does not contain information on the results accomplished.

The MDG3 Fund has also provided funding for international organisations that are linked to the labour movement, including the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the NGO Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO).

¹⁵⁷ The importance of support for organising women in the informal economy is underlined by e.g. Kabeer, 2011.

Both organisations have used the funding for the implementation of specific projects to strengthen gender sensitivity of their local partners to enable them to better defend the rights of women workers and to support them in claiming their rights. They also conducted research and were involved in lobby and advocacy, for example in relation to ILO conventions #183 – on maternity leave – and #189 on domestic workers and, at national level, for labour legislation protecting women workers' rights.

The evaluation of the MDG3 Fund (IOB, 2015a) reports on contributions to (i) increased awareness of women worker's issues and needs among labour oriented organisations, trade unions and among policy makers and (ii) the establishment of (networks) of member-based organisations organising domestic and informal workers. In the end, however, it was not clear that this increased awareness has translated into concrete actions and initiatives to promote labour legislation or healthy working conditions, or has increased access of women to the labour market.

6.5 Conclusions and reflections

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In line with what the literature tells us, Dutch development aid policies have recognised the important role that women play in the economy and for economic development. Both rights-based and instrumental arguments have been used to justify this position. At the same time, gender mainstreaming in the policies in this domain has not been consistent.

Looking at effectiveness, the evaluation finds that for many private sector development programmes little is known of what they have meant for women. This reflects the finding of IOB's policy evaluation on private sector development information on outcomes for final target groups is scarce. The forthcoming evaluation of ORET (IOB, 2015d) and the evaluation of PSOM/PSI are exceptions in this respect; these indicate some positive achievements in terms of women getting access to infrastructure and employment.

This evaluation also finds that the policy emphasis on getting women on board did not necessarily translate into a similar focus at the programme level. When it did, and this also applies to more recent initiatives, the attention paid to women's rights and needs easily slips away in the design of concrete interventions. Organisations that run such programmes do not seem to give women's rights and gender equality the same priority as relevant policies do.

This risk of slippage is also observed in the area of value chain development. While important changes are observed in terms of measures taken to prevent vulnerable groups, like pregnant women, from applying agro-chemicals and insecticides, there is limited evidence of other positive developments. Men are more likely than women to participate and benefit from value chain development. There is also a risk that with increased commercialisation, men take over women's participation, as was noted in the case of Ethiopia. That alternatives are available is shown by the positive that changes were found with the respect to the Fair Trade and Rainforest Alliance certification systems.

The evaluations of the international trade union programmes show that while women's membership of trade unions had increased, this has not translated into more women in union leadership positions. They also show that attention to gender is increasingly mainstreamed at the level of the Dutch trade unions' initiatives but that the outcomes of this are largely still unknown. MDG3 Fund support has contributed to increased awareness of women's workers' issues and needs among trade unions and the establishment of (networks) of organisations of domestic and informal workers. Whether this has translated into concrete actions and initiatives supporting women is unknown.



7

Women and food security

7.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with two areas which are related to the Dutch policy spearhead on food security: land rights and the centrally financed *Support for producer organisations* programme. These two themes have been selected based on their relevance for women and gender. They are not a part of IOB's comprehensive policy evaluation on food security which is foreseen for 2016.¹⁵⁸ This chapter starts with a description of the main issues relating to women and food security, land rights and the role of women's (farmer/producer) organisations. A summary of the main features of Dutch food security policies during the evaluation period is given next. This is followed by a description of what is known of the results of interventions focusing on women's right to land through international initiatives like the ILC and GLTN and via support at the bilateral level in Mozambique, Rwanda and Burundi and the results of support to producer organisations.

7.2 Women and food security – the issues

The literature indicates that women represent a large share of the world's farmers, are major food producers, play a vital role in food security at the household level and provide a large proportion of the labour needed to bring food to the table in developing countries. Depending on the specific context, women work on their own account, as unpaid workers on family farms and as paid or unpaid labourers on other farms and agricultural enterprises. They produce crops, handle livestock and deal with fish farming at subsistence and commercial levels. In many parts of the world, married women and men have distinct, context-specific roles and activities, including separate crops, agricultural plots, and agricultural tasks. Women are often responsible for producing locally important staple crops, provide most of the labour in producing non-traditional agricultural exports and in handling, stocking, processing, and marketing the produce. They are also responsible for fetching water and firewood – apart from taking care of the family and other household chores.

At the same time, IOB (2015c) shows that women's full potential in agriculture remains un(der)utilised as a result of a range of gendered constraints. These include a lack of secure access to (quality) land and other key agricultural inputs, ranging from labour, technology and information to marketing infrastructure. Women are furthermore less likely to be a member of (farmers') associations which are often run by men, and they participate less in the decision-making structures and processes of such organisations. The resulting gender gap differs across countries, but is reinforced by social/cultural/religious restrictions in public participation and mobility and in performing certain tasks that are considered 'male'. With the increasing commercialisation of agriculture, the dominant position of men is changing gender roles – in men's favour.

¹⁵⁸ The food security policy evaluation does pay special attention to gender issues and vulnerable groups, see the Terms of Reference: <http://www.iob-evaluatie.nl/sites/iob-evaluatie.nl/files/terms-of-reference-the-dutch-food-security-policy-2012-2015.pdf>

Following a gender-neutral approach to economic interventions, assuming that ‘economic opportunities are equally available to women and men alike’ implies that the ‘uneven playing field on which people live’ is overlooked (World Bank, 2013: 34). In many instances, this makes it unlikely that women will be able to benefit from the same interventions on an equal footing with men. Moreover, the assumption that when inputs are channelled through men they will trickle down to the household does not hold, particularly when men and women perform different tasks, grow different and when women do not control the proceeds of the sale of their produce.

Unequal access to one or several of these resources and the resulting differences in input levels explain the lower yields on women’s farms: on average these may be 25% lower than those of male farmers.¹⁵⁹ Poor access to such resources results in poor access to profitable cash crops, prevents women farmers from diversifying their produce, limits their prospects for generating cash income and reduces chances of participating in agricultural value chain development. According to FAO, when women’s constraints in the agricultural sector are reduced, they can raise yields on their farms by 20 to 30%, raise agricultural output in developing countries between 2.5 to 4% and thus make a substantial impact on food output and food security globally. It would also have ‘important additional benefits through raising the incomes of female farmers, increasing the availability of food and reducing food prices, and raising women’s employment and real wages’ (FAO, 2011: 3, 39, 42-43). At the same time, data limitations and weaknesses in the existing evidence-base and the contextual nature of gender relations make it difficult to generalise across countries and to accurately estimate the magnitude of effects’ (DFID, 2014a: 5).¹⁶⁰

Looking more specifically at land rights, the literature first of all argues the importance of women’s access to secure land tenure rights from a human rights perspective. Instrumental arguments come in as well: perceived tenure security can lead to productivity-enhancing land investment, may result in increased income and a better bargaining position of women in their household and lead to increased allocation of household resources to women and children. Moreover, women with land tenure security are less likely to become economically vulnerable when they grow old, lose their spouse, divorce or in case men migrate. Nevertheless, gender disparities in land access remain high. A joint study of FAO, IFAD and ILO (2010) found that in all countries for which data are available, women were less likely to own land than men. When women do own land, the size of their plots is smaller; the quality is poorer; and the plots are often divided over several locations (FAO et al., 2010). Women’s access to land is moreover undermined by pressure on the land caused by the growing market for land, increased competition as a result of population growth, and rural-urban migration. Patriarchal customary land rights systems play a major role in many countries.

¹⁵⁹ See e.g. Croppenstedt et al., 2013: 3; World Bank, 2013: 2; World Bank, 2014: 9 and Alderman et al., 2003: 63.

¹⁶⁰ It has to be kept in mind in this respect that ‘not all women are the same, and that large variations in their age, marital status, education level and size of holding require more specific targeting than just differentiating between men and women farmers’ (Hazel, 2014: 16).

While a ‘one size fits all-solution’ is not feasible, the literature emphasises the importance of women’s *collective action* and organisation. Support for women’s groups can increase women’s land tenure security by enforcing existing legislation and gender-responsive policies from the community level.

7.3 Dutch policies on women and food security

The Dutch policies in the area of food security are based on the same considerations as those for economic development at large:

- a *rights-based perspective* – one of the principles of the policy note on agriculture, rural development and food security of 2008 was that the Netherlands aimed for equal treatment of women and girls in access to natural resources, water, land use and land rights, credit, technology and decision-making (KST 118293, 2008: 8).¹⁶¹ Recently, a link is also made with (women’s) voice: providing small and mid-size farmers and entrepreneurs, especially women, with access to means of production, knowledge, financial services and markets would permit them to increase their share in food chains and interest organisations (KST 33625-147, 2014: 5-6).
- *instrumentalist arguments* – focusing on women-dominated, smallholder agriculture was seen as the most effective way for reducing famine and poverty and stimulating further economic growth (KST 33625-5, 2013: 93, 131).¹⁶²

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In terms of access to resources, the Ministry has stressed the importance of land rights for the poor in general and for women in particular. Improving access to land was to be given special attention, amongst others by addressing constraints in existing legal and regulatory systems.¹⁶³ This is also clear from a letter to Parliament of April 2014 stressing that equal access to land for women is an aim of Dutch policy and a recurring theme in supported land governance programmes (KST 26234-156, 2014). This position has been translated into support for the International Land Coalition (ILC) and the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) and for a variety of bilateral initiatives in various (former) Dutch partner countries.¹⁶⁴ In addition, land rights were taken up in programmes funded through Nuffic and SNV. Women’s access to land was also one of the priority themes of the MDG3 Fund. Moreover, support is given to strengthen women’s organisations that work on equality before the law for female farmers and women’s equal participation in farmers’ organisations.

¹⁶¹ See also KST 122477, 2008 which refers to difficulties women experience in terms of getting access to financial markets and services and unequal property and inheritance rights for women making it more difficult for them to participate in economic activities on an equal footing with men. These were also topics to be addressed in the policy dialogue with the Dutch aid partner countries.

¹⁶² KST 31250-78, 2011: 3; KST 32605-54, 2011: 3 and KST 33625-5, 2013: 98.

¹⁶³ KST 108425B, 2007: 81-82; KST 119600B, 2008: 32; KST 140221, 2010: 35; KST 32605-54, 2011: 3 and KST 33625-5, 2013: 58, 93. On land rights see further Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011a.

¹⁶⁴ This concerns interventions in Benin, Bolivia, Burundi, Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Macedonia, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Suriname, Uganda and Zimbabwe during the evaluation period. Also see KST 31250-78, 2011: 3; KST 31250-95, 2012: 18-19; KST 32605-114, 2012: 6, 7; KST 33625-38, 2012: 8; and KST 33625-5, 2013: 112.

Still, this attention to women, either as small farmers or female entrepreneurs, has lacked consistency in Dutch policy notes. For example, an updated progress report of January 2011 on the policy note on agriculture, rural development and food security of 2008 contains no references to either gender or women (KST 31250-76, 2011).

Policy-wise, this appears to have changed in recent times, when it was explained that the Dutch private sector development policy would pay special attention to vulnerable groups such as small farmers and producers, minorities, youth and women (KST 33625-44, 2013: 14). Recent Ministry documents point at a focus on female entrepreneurship, vocational education for women and inclusive finance that is accessible for women, as key elements for inclusive economic growth, also in the area of food security.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, a joint letter of the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation and the Minister of Economic Affairs of November 2014, highlights that the Netherlands will 'concentrate on providing access to means of production, knowledge, financial services and markets for small and medium-sized farms and enterprises, especially those run by women' (KST 33625-147, 2014). To bring about 'inclusive and sustainable agricultural development worldwide', '(opportunities) for, and obstacles to, gender equality are addressed and tackled wherever possible' (KST 33625-147, 2014).

7.4 Results

The following paragraphs summarise what is known of the results of the support provided through the International Land Coalition (ILC) and the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN). At country level, the evaluation has looked at a series of bilateral interventions in Burundi, Mozambique and Rwanda. This is followed by a presentation of the results of the 'Support for producer organisations programme' run by the Dutch NGO Agriterria.

7.4.1 Women and land rights

International support to women's right to land

The International Land Coalition (ILC) is a global alliance of 152 intergovernmental and civil society organisations. They work together to promote secure and equitable access to and control over land for poor women and men through advocacy, dialogue, knowledge sharing, capacity building, and empowerment. This is best illustrated by ILC's strategic framework for 2011-2015 with its goal 'to enable rural women and men to gain secure and equitable access to and control over land in order to increase their food security and overcome poverty and vulnerability' (ILC, 2011: 9). In addition, ILC has a Women's Resource Access Programme to build the capacity of women to become active on women's land

¹⁶⁵ Other elements are regional economic integration, sustainable production and supply chains, inclusive financing, good economic governance, and international corporate social responsibility.

issues. The Netherlands has been supporting the work of the ILC with a budget of over EUR 7 million in the period 2007-2014.¹⁶⁶

Back in 2005, the Independent Evaluation Group judged that ILC had been ‘only moderately successful in addressing the gender dimensions of land reform in its programming’ (IEG, 2005: 50). The mid-term review of ILC’s current work of February 2014 indicates that this has changed and states that ILC’s work on women’s rights is seen as one of its ‘most relevant activities’ (MDF, 2014: 8). The review refers to regional cooperation on women’s land rights in Africa (information sharing and development of a joint strategy) and inputs provided by ILC for policy notes on e.g. the registration of land titles for women and studies on the impacts of customary practices and laws on women’s land rights and the development of a gender dimension of national land rights policies.¹⁶⁷ ILC also provided recommendations on the rights of rural women to the CEDAW Committee to ‘strengthen the profile of women’s land rights and gender-sensitive and gender-equitable land governance’ (MDF, 2014). However, the mid-term evaluation says little about the *effects* of ILC efforts and only discusses gender-relevant *activities*.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also supports the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) with a contribution of EUR 16.5 million for 2013-2017. Based on earlier work done by the Huairou Commission (which was also financially supported under the MDG3 Fund), and together with the ILC and the NGO Federation of Surveyors, GLTN has developed a mechanism for gendering land tools, i.e. the so-called Gender Evaluation Criteria for Large-scale Land Tools (GEC). The GEC is an instrument to ‘objectively assess whether land interventions, such as land legislation, and the institutional and regulatory framework associated with national land laws, but also customary laws and practices, address gender concerns’ (Dumashie, 2014: 3). For more information, see text box 7.1.

¹⁶⁶ Dutch support to ILC dates back to 2004 when the Netherlands sponsored country specific projects in Guatemala, Indonesia, the Philippines, and South Africa. Since 2007, un-earmarked programme support is given.

¹⁶⁷ See MDF, 2014: 31, 36, 39-40.

Text box 7.1 *The Gender Evaluation Criteria for Large-scale Land Tools*

The GEC is ‘a mechanism by which groups are able to legitimately and with some authority evaluate the on-going land processes to ensure that their needs, concerns and participation are considered in the implementation of the tool itself, and that the results of the tool benefit them as well as others in their communities’ (Dumashie, 2014: 10). Through the GEC, (women’s) grassroots organisations, and to a lesser extent land professionals and government officials, are trained so they can ensure that the land tool being used in their country/community is gender responsive. The GEC comprises of a matrix with 22 evaluation questions, possible indicators and sources of data that can be used to determine the gender sensitivity of a large-scale land tool. These are clustered into the themes of equal participation; capacity development; legal and institutional considerations; social and cultural considerations; economic considerations/scale, and coordination and sustainability. Piloting of the GEC was done by civil society organisations that partner with the Huairou Commission in relation to different land reform initiatives in Brazil, Ghana and Nepal, followed by Uganda. Currently, the GEC has been scaled up to countries like Togo, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Rwanda. In Latin America it was linked to ILC’s Regional plan in Colombia and Bolivia. In Asia, the GEC tool has been rolled out in Mongolia, India, Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia and Myanmar (GLTN, 2014: 31).

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In terms of results achieved, the GEC has contributed to the formal revision of certain relevant (land) laws and codes and commitment from government institutions to promote gender equality. Another result achieved concerns the equal rights ensured in land management processes in Brazil and Uganda (Araujo, 2015). As support to the GLTN only started in 2013, no other results are known yet.

Women and land rights in Burundi

Between 2009 and 2014, the Netherlands has supported the *Programme d’appui à la gestion foncière au Burundi* of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation with a budget of EUR 3.4 million. The programme aims at securing land tenure through the delivery of land certificates; this is expected to reduce the incidence of land related conflicts and boost agricultural production. However, while the registration process helped in getting several (dormant) conflicts resolved, there is no evidence yet that the project has realised these ambitions. Project documents, interviews and an evaluation conducted in 2014 (Wennink et Lankhorst, 2014), give the following picture:

- The project has a purely technical approach and gender issues are not prioritised, though there have been several discussions on women’s involvement in the programme since 2013. No specific interventions were foreseen for women to facilitate access to seeds, improved production techniques or to improve commercialisation of their produce.

No interventions were carried out to change norms and values regarding women accessing land.¹⁶⁸ Gender expertise and studies of the NGO platform have remained unused.

- Women (and men) have gained knowledge on the new land law and land certification system. However, they still have an incorrect understanding of the possibilities offered by the new law in securing their (customary) rights.¹⁶⁹
- There is a low uptake of women in terms of the number of land plots registered and land certificates issued: women accounted for only 6% in 2010 and 5% in 2013 of the number of people applying for a land certificate. What is more, these were often richer, rather than poor women. Land rights (*usufruct*) for women as regulated by customary practice are not secured and might be at risk, especially for divorced and unmarried women and widows.
- While the media were trained on the *Code foncier* and the land certification system, they do not dare to speak out on this politically sensitive topic.

Women and land rights in Mozambique

Dutch involvement in land issues goes back to around 1997 when Mozambique introduced its new Land Law. Implementation of this law, however, has been slow, mainly due to a lack of capacity among local government institutions. Land rights were an issue under the embassy's multi-annual strategic plans for 2008-2011 and 2012-2015. Funding was provided (amongst other) for the following projects and organisations (see table 7.1):

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Table 7.1 Supported land rights interventions in Mozambique	
Project	Budget and time frame
Organização Rural de Ajuda Mútua (ORAM) ¹⁷⁰	EUR 2.3 million (2006-2014)
Training on land rights through FAO and IFAD and involving the Centre for legal and judicial training (CFJJ) and the National Directorate for Promoting Rural Development	EUR 3.5 million (2005-2012)
Community Land Use Fund	EUR 1.4 million (2005-2012)

In addition, part of the MDG3 Fund project 'Women's Land Rights in Southern Africa' (WOLAR) of ActionAid was implemented in Mozambique, with the total grant for activities in Mozambique accumulating to a total of EUR 665,538.

Unfortunately, the information available for these projects does not go beyond the level of activities and the outputs produced. Evidence on outcomes is not available or anecdotal. This reflects the limitations of their M&E systems (ORAM, CFJJ), with the project with CFJJ

¹⁶⁸ Effective access to land is – in most rural regions – regulated by customary law denying full land rights for women.

¹⁶⁹ The evaluation of 2014 also indicates that the database is not up to date: the number of land transactions in the data base is rather low and does not reflect the real situation. Nor is there yet full ownership of the land registration system.

¹⁷⁰ ORAM, a national NGO working in defence of rural communities' rights, focuses on training (e.g. on Mozambique's Land Law of 1997), civic engagement, land rights related research and direct service delivery (land delimitation and demarcation, land use planning and preparation of business plans). ORAM is also active in lobby and advocacy on land rights issues.

undertaking no M&E after the training and having no clear strategy for follow up after the training (FAO, 2011: 8).¹⁷¹ It also reflects the finding that, apart from being expensive, the process of actually obtaining a land right is very lengthy, stretching beyond the duration of a project (ORAM, WOLAR).

Another finding is that, with the exception of the WOLAR project, projects tend to pay little attention to women's special needs.¹⁷² In the case of *ORAM*, there was little awareness of and knowledge on gender issues, even though an organisational gender policy had been adopted. In the case of *CFJJ*, the evaluation found that although women's rights were included in its training packages, the topic did not stick among participants. While this aspect was strengthened over time, the low number of female participants and lack of attention to women's issues prompted NORAD to finance a separate project on women and land issues.¹⁷³ A gender audit of the first phase of the *Community Land Use Fund* project showed, that (i) there was a lack of investment in gender issues; (ii) no gender analysis was done; and (iii) there was a low level of participation of women in project activities, though this varied across provinces (Forsythe and Chidiamassamba, 2010: 8).

The *WOLAR* project, which focused on training paralegals, indicated that these paralegals have played a role in mediating a variety of conflicts and rights violations (e.g. in mediating negotiations with investors), in assisting individual women to access justice and awareness raising within the communities on issues such as land laws and domestic violence.

Finally, the importance of women participating in farmer's associations was illustrated by the *ORAM* and *WOLAR* projects, which both had a focus on community land titling rather than individual land rights. This meant that both projects initiated farmers and women's associations and supported them in getting legalised, which was the first step towards getting a community land title in Mozambique. Interviews indicate that women who participated in the *WOLAR* project knew what to do to claim their right and in case of its violation, and that collective action is important vis-à-vis Government decisions to offer land to an outside investor. The big problem remains to actually obtain a land title; only one title deed was granted by the end of the project.

Women and land rights in Rwanda

The multi-annual strategic plan of the Netherlands' Embassy in Kigali for 2012-2015 made natural resource management a key policy area under the spearhead of 'food and nutrition security'. It identified the improvement of land tenure systems as a condition for boosting investments in land productivity. It acknowledged that the on-going land tenure regularisation

¹⁷¹ With respect to *CFJJ*, available reports refer to potential long-term effects of awareness raising, but it remains unknown whether training has contributed to addressing the issues on which the project was based, i.e. for community members to be able to use existing land laws and avoid that small holder land rights were jeopardised and for the judiciary to better intervene in land related conflicts (FAO, 2007: 1).

¹⁷² See e.g. Geldermalsen and Chavel, 2011: 21, 24, 34; Oranje et al., 2013: 3.

¹⁷³ The goal of this women's project was to 'reinforce and deepen the treatment of women's rights in the wider *CFJJ* programme and to provide direct support to paralegals from women's NGOs and communities who are working to defend the rights of women over land and natural resources' (FAO, 2011).

process required special attention to women and other vulnerable groups. Against this background, the Embassy has been co-financing the DFID-led basket fund for the Land Tenure Regularisation programme. The Dutch contribution to this programme, which is currently in its second phase,¹⁷⁴ equals EUR 11.45 million for the period 2011-2015.

During the first 3 years of the programme (2010-2013) some 10.3 million parcels of land were surveyed. Over 8 million leases were approved by the Government for all rightful land owners and more than 5.7 million leases were collected by the claimants.¹⁷⁵ It was a one-off, low-cost, community-based process of land tenure regularisation – about EUR 4-5 per parcel. By July 2011, 27% of all parcels were registered on women alone, and 59% on married couples. The remaining 14% of all parcels were registered on men alone.¹⁷⁶ The success of the programme is explained by factors such as: (i) political commitment on the side of the government¹⁷⁷; (ii) a detailed strategic plan, coupled with the necessary flexibility; and (iii) a comprehensive communication strategy targeting different urban and rural population groups and using a blend of traditional and innovative media.

An evaluation of the gender impact of the *pilot* of the programme conducted in 2011 by Ali et al. pointed to three effects:

- Improved access for legally married women and better recording of inheritance rights.
- Reduced land market activity rather than distress sales.
- Increased investment and maintenance of soil conservation measures, particularly among female-headed households.

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Along the same lines, a survey of 2013 indicates that the programme had played an important role in encouraging investment in agricultural inputs, such as fertilisers and improved seeds (Niyonsaba et al., 2013: 2).¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ The aim for this phase is 'to improve investment, rural growth and secure women's rights by providing financial support to the Rwanda government to issue registered title to every landholder, and establish systems for maintenance of those titles'.

¹⁷⁵ The main reasons for non-collection appeared to be related to (1) cost of fees, (2) distance to collect documents and (3) the perception that holding a title document might render the holder more likely to be taxed in the future. When the poorest households were exempted from paying the fee, collection figures increased, with up to 99% of those on waiver lists collecting their lease. By July 2013, 68% of leases approved had been collected.

¹⁷⁶ When a couple is registering land, both husband and wife have full equal rights; the names of both wife and husband appear on the registration certificate and the title deed, with no conditions in terms of equality (Mbembe Binda et al., 2012: 17).

¹⁷⁷ Land was a priority in the Government's Vision 2020 (2000), its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2002), the National Land Policy (2004) and the Organic Land Law (2005) that outlined new procedures for land tenure and titling, registering and administering land and land titles, and guidance for land use and land planning.

¹⁷⁸ Other external factors that contributed to the investment in agricultural outputs include the Government programmes that subsidised fertiliser use being organic or chemical and distributed free of charge, the Crop Intensification Programme (CIP) and other programmes that also distributed fertiliser and improved seeds free of charge and supported the agricultural cooperatives to access and use tractors.

Nevertheless, more recent reports nuance the findings presented above. They acknowledge that the land rights of women with an unregistered marriage (estimated to be around 15% according to DFID, 2013a) were excluded.¹⁷⁹ This challenge is related to men's customary rights to land and is deeply embedded in socio-cultural norms and values. The programme did not fully examine how these could be changed. Moreover, having a land certificate does not necessarily guarantee women decision-making over land (Bayisengea et al., 2015). In addition, while women's increased awareness of land issues may have led to an increase in the number of land related intra-family disputes, it did not always result in actual inheritance of land rights (Gillingham and Buckle, 2014: 7). Implementation of the land tenure regularisation programme was also hampered by the high illiteracy rates among women.

7.4.2 Support for producer organisations

The *Support for producer organisations* programme is in its second phase. It is managed by the Dutch NGO Agriterra, together with a series of European agro-agencies. For the period 2007-2015, a total budget of EUR 100 million was set aside by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Main purposes were to:

- contribute to reducing poverty and hunger through support for 'organised agriculture';
- strengthen the institutional capacity of producer organisations in developing countries and
- stimulate the organisation of their members around economic and income generating activities.

Activities include supporting national farmers' organisations, strengthening extension services and training, business and ICT development and research. On gender and development, Agriterra aims to increase 'women participation in project activities as well as addressing gender issues in the activities and internal organisation of the producer organisations', 'to improve the livelihood of rural women, and to increase women empowerment' (Agriterra, 2009: 135).

Agriterra reports mention that in the period 2007-2010 over 1.8 million women participated in projects and that the share of women participants went up from 11% in 2006 to 44% in 2012 and 50% by 2013.¹⁸⁰ This share varied across Agriterra's different working areas: lower in areas like participatory policy formulation and market and chain development (around 20%) but higher in the processing of agricultural products (63%) as well as in banking, credit and insurance (70%).

¹⁷⁹ In the impact evaluation conducted by Ali et al. (2011), 76% of the couples in the sample population had an official marriage certificate. According to Gillingham and Buckle (2014), '(without) a definitive marriage certificate, there was no formal requirement to include a cohabitant on the lease. Widows from non-formalised relationships were also found to be at particular risk in traditional societies as the deceased husband's family would claim the land title. Moreover, it is in this area of intra-family dispute resolution that clashes between legal provisions and traditional laws and customs are most likely to occur' (Gillingham and Buckle, 2014: 7).

¹⁸⁰ Agriterra, 2009: 72, 137; Agriterra, 2012: 19 and Agriterra, 2013: 4, 40. The figure of 50% is obtained from Agriterra's proposal for a new grant of March 2015.

Agriterra does not monitor change at the impact level, nor is there any reliable evidence of what its activities have meant for the women concerned at the outcome level. It has collected several hundreds of individual testimonials over the years, but these do not allow drawing objective conclusions on outcomes.¹⁸¹ MDF's mid-term performance audit of 2010 (MDF, 2010) gives only some anecdotal information on training through female village associations (Cambodia), gender awareness raising (Ghana, Tanzania) and the support of women's groups (India). At the same time, the report points at 'still limited evidence of truly integrated gender interventions' with gender projects resembling 'women projects'.

The evaluation of Agriterra's support to capacity development (MDF, 2011a), also gives little insight into results achieved. It only reconfirms Agriterra's intention to include women in its economic activities and provides information on its efforts to strengthen women's participation in activities and meetings and the governing bodies of the producer organisations that it supports. It observes that despite increased membership of these organisations, women were not proportionally represented in formal structures and did not have an equal share in technical positions (MDF, 2011a: 17, 23).¹⁸²

A recent evaluation of the programme (KIT, 2015) reports the following on 'gender and inclusion':

- Agriterra's policy to support well-organised producer organisations that provide services to (would-be) entrepreneurial farmers implied that 'certain organizations, and even more important, certain groups of producers, i.e. those with little opportunity to develop into more entrepreneurial agricultural producers, are possibly excluded. Also, there was no explicit gender or inclusion strategy addressing inequalities in a systematic way' (KIT, 2015: 11, 44, 72). This applied for both the programme as a whole and at the level of projects and supported organisations. For most of the organisations examined (13 out of 18), it was a matter of counting women – with no conclusions drawn. In only two cases were gender inequalities recognised and addressed to achieve outcomes at project, community and household level (KIT, 2015: 58).
- The evidence of outcomes at household level is still limited and it was impossible to draw gender-disaggregated conclusions (KIT, 2015: 24).
- Many producer organisations lacked the capacity to identify and address gender concerns. The programme had not contributed to organisational strengthening in this domain.

Examining Agriterra's proposal for a next phase it shows that these observations on strategy, inclusiveness and M&E, which are more than 'counting beans', remain to be addressed.

¹⁸¹ According to KIT (2015), '(it) is not always clear who the beneficiaries are (e.g. resource poor farmers, women, youth), what the contribution of the intervention has been to the change observed, and how different types of members benefit' (KIT, 2015: 44).

¹⁸² On this issue see also KIT, 2015: 44.

7.5 Conclusions and reflections

The literature suggests that while women are major food producers, their full potential in agriculture is underutilised because of gendered constraints on access to key inputs, including land. Improving women's perceived land security is identified as an important factor for increasing food production. Women's collective action through farmer organisations can be instrumental in this respect. This has been recognised in Dutch food security policies. The priority attached to improving women's access to land within the framework of the spearhead food security has been translated into support for activities in a range of countries. Increasing women's right to land was also one of the priorities of the MDG3 Fund. The importance of women's collective action was an element for the Support to Producers Organisations programme.

Information on the results of these initiatives is limited due to insufficient attention to systematic M&E that looks beyond the realisation of activities and outputs such as the numbers of women trained or the numbers of women becoming a member of farmers associations. The recent evaluation of the Support to Producers Organisations programme proves that attention to women was indeed little more than a matter of counting women. Many producer organisations lacked the capacity to identify and address gender concerns. The increase in women's membership of organisations did not go hand-in-hand with women being proportionally represented in formal structures, like boards and commissions, or having an equal share in technical positions.

Risking stating the obvious, the land rights interventions supported in Burundi, Mozambique and Rwanda demonstrate that improving women's perceived tenure security is a complex, very much context specific and long-term endeavour. The interventions confirm the influence of factors identified in the literature such as prevailing gender norms, customary law and social and cultural traditions with respect to land use and ownership, the degree of enforcement of statutory land laws and their relations with customary laws, the attention to women's access to land in Government policies, and the capacity of land registration institutions to implement these policies at a cost that is also affordable by poor women in the longer term. They also confirm the importance of awareness-raising on women's land rights and, in the case of Mozambique, the importance of organising women as a starting point for obtaining a community land title. The case of Burundi shows that unless the Government makes women's land rights a clear political priority, external support and civil society watchdogs will have little influence on what is happening on the ground.



8

Women and water and sanitation

8.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with a brief on the importance of paying attention to gender issues in the design and implementation of water and sanitation projects and programmes. It then provides a short presentation of the Dutch policies on water and sanitation and how gender concerns were incorporated into policy design. This is followed by an assessment of the results of these policies and what benefits women (and girls) have had. This is done on the basis of existing evaluation materials; in particular IOB's evaluations in the field of water and sanitation that were published between 2007 and 2012.

8.2 Women, water and sanitation – the issues

The link between gender equality and the need for access to good quality infrastructure has been internationally acknowledged for some time now. With respect to the water sector this is e.g. evident from the Dublin International Conference on Water and the Environment and the Rio Conference on sustainable development (1992), the Beijing World Conference on Women (1995), the 2nd World Water Forum that was held in The Hague (2000) and the World Summit of Sustainable Development of Johannesburg (2002). All these conferences and summits have acknowledged that water and sanitation development is not 'gender neutral':

- because of a gender-based household division of labour – women (and girls) are generally responsible for collecting water and are more affected by a lack of access to this resource;
- women's needs and demands for infrastructure are different from those of men (e.g. in terms of the ability to pay);
- women would benefit more if this state of affairs would be improved. Such benefits are expressed in terms of a reduced disease burden, less time and effort spent on water collection, and, though with little empirical evidence to support it, women's increased ability to invest more time in income-earning activities.

In this respect, the literature talks about the importance of involving women and the need to address 'practical and cultural obstacles to women's equal participation in management and decision making' (OECD, 2006: 29-30). It also mentions that meaningful involvement of (poor) women in training and in water user committees improves the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of projects. On the other hand, there is little evidence that women's increased participation indeed has any effect, positive or negative, on the *frequency and quality* of maintenance of the water infrastructure' (Dekker, 2013: 52). At the same time, it is realised that obtaining this effect is more easily said than done since 'mechanisms for water management and access are shaped by other societal relationships and structures of inequality' and 'existing inequalities (poverty, caste, etc.) may limit women's chances to effectively raise their voice through community water management systems' (Cleaver and Hamada, 2010: 32-35).

8.3 Dutch policies on women, water and sanitation

Dutch development aid policies have recognised the strategic role of women in water and sanitation for some time (IOB, 2000: 26). In 2005, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that gender would feature in its support for safe drinking water and sanitation for the poorest: women were to be closely involved in decision-making on e.g. the choice of location, design, and the use and maintenance of water points. This position is supported by the research literature.

Gender equality was also one of the issues to be included in the national water plans that the Netherlands supported in e.g. Bangladesh, Bolivia and Egypt at the start of the new Millennium.¹⁸³ Given the need for sustainability of the Dutch supported investments, a pro-poor and gender-focused approach was to be pursued, though it was clear that there was still quite a long way to go, despite a more or less equal participation of women and men in water user groups (KST 111455, 2007: 3).

A policy note on growth, inequality and poverty from January 2010 reconfirmed the importance of paying attention to gender issues in the planning, decision-making and management of infrastructure and public services. The reasoning was similar to what is mentioned above (KST 140221, 2010: 29-30). While the same year saw the move towards 'integrated water management', for what remained on water and sanitation activities, women and girls continued to be an important target group. In other areas of the Ministry's water-related initiatives, there was a promise for special attention paid to women, although the concept of 'special attention' was not further explained.¹⁸⁴

Gender equality remained one of the cross-cutting themes in subsequent years. Like before, the importance of women's participation in decision-making on water and sanitation as well as water management was underlined.¹⁸⁵ This position is maintained to date.¹⁸⁶ Confirming the notion that infrastructure development is not 'gender neutral', it was recognised that women were often responsible for collecting water, had special needs and were most affected by the consequences of drought and flooding (KST 32605-65, 2012: 10; KST 33625-5, 2013: 98). Gender was furthermore incorporated into the subsidy framework for the Sustainable Water Fund of 2012, even though proposals submitted generally failed to take this issue into consideration.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ See e.g. KST 51688, 2001: 18, 20, 27; KST 87083, 2005: 4; and KST 108425 B, 2007: 112.

¹⁸⁴ See e.g. KST 330000-V-2, 2011: 126; KST 32605-114, 2012: 7; KST 32605-65, 2012: 7 and KST 32605-114, 2012: 10.

¹⁸⁵ See KST 32605-65, 2012: 6 and KST 32605-74, 2012.

¹⁸⁶ See KST 33625-74, 2014: 4-5, 8 and KST 33625-86, 2014: 2.

¹⁸⁷ An assessment of the way in which gender was considered in the first two rounds (2012-2013) of the Fund shows that proposals emphasised technical and financial aspects but lacked information on target populations and beneficiaries. With few exceptions, projects did not address the involvement of women and lacked a strategy that would help women to overcome obstacles to participate and how this could contribute to better project results (Partnerships Resource Centre, 2014: 3, 6, 13, 21).

8.4 Results

Overall, the different IOB evaluations on water and sanitation (2007-2012) show that the supported interventions have reduced distances, waiting times and workload related to water collection. In [Tanzania](#), 35 out of 51 water user groups involved in the evaluation reported an average of 60% less time spent on fetching water (IOB, 2007: 73-74). In the case of [Benin](#), time savings were calculated at 41 days per year per household (IOB/BMZ, 2011: 17, 104).¹⁸⁸

A few evaluations also show positive findings on the participation of women in water user associations. However, in the case of [Tanzania](#), it was found that although management committees were 'gender-balanced', there was still a need to improve 'women's effective participation and gender sensitivity in water supply management' and more needed to be done to secure their '(gender sensitive) institutional sustainability' (IOB, 2007: 17, 20-22). Experiences in [Yemen](#) were critical: none of the water user committees had a single female member and women had little or no voice in the planning and management of the sector at community level' (IOB, 2008d: 20, 38-39, 127).¹⁸⁹ According to the report, 'the almost total exclusion of women from the sector imposes real costs on them as individuals and on rural society as a whole' (IOB, 2008d: 26). In the case of [Benin](#), the evaluation found no 'special initiatives to engage women either in water user committees or in management functions as part of the professionalization strategy'. Despite considerable investment in equal participation in community level water user committees, women's participation and voice in rural water supply structures, particularly in leadership positions, remained limited (IOB/BMZ, 2011: 152-154, 157).¹⁹⁰

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The picture of whether time saved on fetching water is used for increased school enrolment of girls or for girls studying is mixed in the case of [Benin](#) (IOB/BMZ, 2011: 101, 127-128) while in [Yemen](#) part of the time saved was indeed used for schooling – however, this was primarily for boys and only to a lesser extent for girls (IOB, 2008d: 97). In [Mozambique](#), no evidence was found of increased school enrolment, better attendance or of better educational outcomes of girls as a result of releasing them from water fetching chores (IOB/UNICEF, 2011: 17, 108-111.) There was also no systematic relationship in this respect with the construction of single sex latrines in schools. In the case of [Egypt](#), changes observed in school enrolment did not distinguish between girls and boys.

¹⁸⁸ Similar findings are also reported by IEG (IEG, 2010: 54), with its gender evaluation of 2009 finding a reduction in time spent on washing and cooking and time saved that allows mothers to be away from home doing productive activities more days per year (IEG, 2010: 56) even though targeted support for women had been at a low level in about half the countries that the evaluation had covered.

¹⁸⁹ According to the report, efforts to build a stronger role, 'have generally proved unsustainable in the cultural and social context of Yemen' (IOB, 2008d: 38-39).

¹⁹⁰ A study on SNV support to water, sanitation and hygiene in Benin, comes to different findings on the involvement of women in the siting and organisation of new water points, which, especially for women, resulted in a reduction in the chore of fetching water (Adjinacou and Lambrecht, 2013: 46, 54, 67, 83).

The evaluations find positive impacts on the use of time saved for unpaid economic and household activities in *Benin*, *Tanzania*, as well as *Yemen* – though in this case men benefitted more than women – and mixed impacts in *Egypt*. Only in the case of *Benin* did the evaluation observe that time saved had been used by women for some income generating activities. However, opportunities for doing so were ‘often limited in poor rural areas’ (IOB, 2012b: 16). Where these opportunities did exist, they were often not utilised to their full extent. The economic impact thereof was limited to a 0.7% increase in household income.¹⁹¹ On health impacts, IOB evaluations say little. If they do, it is not sex specific.¹⁹²

Table 8.1 below summarises the main findings reflected in the preceding paragraphs.

Table 8.1 Water and sanitation projects and the impact for women						
	Bangladesh	Benin	Egypt	Mozambique	Tanzania	Yemen
Increased women’s participation in water user associations to maintain water supplies (around 50%)	+	-		+	+	-
Time saved in collecting water used by girls for studying or attending school/increased school enrolment of girls		+/-	+	-	+/-	+/-
Time saved for unpaid (economic) activities (firewood collection, work on land) and household activities of women/girls		+	+/-		+	+
Time saved for income generating activities		+	-			

Legend: + = positive impact; +/- = mixed impact; - = no impact observed

¹⁹¹ According to IOB/BMZ ‘This is in line with another study that has shown that economic benefits from productive use of time gained through water interventions need to be linked with economic projects for women’(IOB/BMZ, 2011: 16; 101). Koolwal and van de Walle (2010) on the other hand find no impacts of improved access to water on women’s off-farm work but do find that with such better access to water school enrolment of boys and girls improved in countries where there are substantial gender gaps in schooling such as Yemen and Pakistan (Koolwal and van de Walle, 2010: 22).

¹⁹² On Mozambique, Elbers et al. (2012) find that the interventions under the joint NL/UNICEF One Million Initiative programme had a substantial effect: using a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey based indicator for the prevalence of water borne diseases, they find that between 2008 and 2010, ‘the disease indicator in the sample declined from 30 percent to 14 percent’ and that ‘one fifth of this decline can be attributed to interventions under programme in particular to the sanitation intervention’ (Elbers et al., 2012: 20–21).

8.5 Conclusions and reflections

Both the design and underlying argumentation of Dutch policies have been in line with international agreements on paying attention to gender issues and women's participation in water and sanitation. They are also in line with what the literature offers in this respect.

IOB's evaluation of support to water and sanitation (IOB, 2012b) shows that Dutch support has reduced the distances that women and girls have to travel, the time they have to spend and their workload related to water collection. The evaluations show variable and context-specific results in terms of women's participation in water user committees, which are considered important from a sustainability perspective. Not much happened in this respect in Benin and Yemen, while Mozambique and Tanzania showed more positive developments. Whether this increased participation by women indeed resulted in better maintenance of water and sanitation infrastructure – as has been the line of reasoning – is, however, not known.

Findings with respect to the anticipated impact on increased school enrolment of girls resulting from reductions in time to fetch water are mixed – with boys benefiting more in Yemen and no evidence found of increased school enrolment. In the case of Mozambique there was no evidence pointing to increased attendance or better educational outcomes of girls. The same is true for economic impact: reductions in time to fetch water had in most cases resulted in an increase in women's unpaid economic and household activities. Where time saved had been used by women to undertake some income-generating activities, the financial impact was limited to less than a 1% increase in household income in the case of Benin. On health impacts, IOB evaluations say little. If they do it is not sex specific.



9

Women's voice in politics and beyond

9.1 Introduction

This chapter is about the Dutch policies on women's leadership and political participation. This is a priority area in the international gender policy of 2011 and in the second Dutch National Action Plan (NAP) to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325. It starts with a description of the issues concerning women's political participation. This is followed by a short presentation of the policies pursued by the Netherlands and of what is known of the results of the different projects and programmes. Attention is paid to support provided through UN Women in Egypt and the results accomplished under the MDG3 Fund. In addition information is provided on the projects financed under the National Action Plan UNSCR 1325, the Women on the Frontline initiative and what is known of the attention to gender within the framework of the portfolio of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD).

9.2 Women's participation in politics – the issues

Women can play different roles in politics: as voters, political party members, candidates and office holders, and members of civil society. They have to operate in political systems that were established, organised and dominated by men and that, in many places, are not favourable to historically marginalised social groups, including women. Internationally, women's political participation has been on the agenda since the adoption of CEDAW in 1979. It features also in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), General Recommendation #23 issued by the CEDAW Committee in relation to Article 7 of CEDAW (1997) as well as UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

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The gap between women and men on political empowerment remains. Although numbers say little about women's meaningful engagement and influence in decision-making, the available data are clear that, overall, women are still grossly under-represented in political life at all levels: national government, parliament and local government.¹⁹³

Recommendations have been issued time and again to set a target reserving 30% of seats in national parliaments for women – i.e. the often quoted quota system (see text box 7.1 in IOB, 2015c) – as a first step toward gender equality in politics. Furthermore, the available evidence suggests that women's access to politics is not simply a matter of national wealth; a country's level of democratization, of women's educational attainment or of their participation in the labour force. Laws restricting women's rights to vote and stand for elections still exist in e.g. the Middle East while gender-based violence is not uncommon for women politicians once elected in office. Opinions differ also about whether the quota system has really resulted in increased presence of women in parliament: they 'will only be successful when they are used as one of many strategies for women's enhanced political participation' (De Silva de Alwis, 2014: 30; Krook et al., 2009).

¹⁹³ See IOB, 2015c: 90-97.

The importance of getting women into politics has been argued from a rights perspective – ‘equality of opportunity in politics is a human right’ (UN Millennium Project, 2005: 104).¹⁹⁴ Since they make ‘up half the population so it is only fair and right that women have equal representation in legislatures that make decisions over their lives’ (Tinker, 2004: 533). These arguments are clearly in line with what is agreed upon internationally. Another line of thinking is instrumental and comes with the notion of ‘smart politics’: women’s participation in politics is likely to have ‘important spinoffs’ in terms of benefits for society in general and women in particular and in terms of less corruption.¹⁹⁵ However, the link between women’s presence in politics and their influence over political outcomes has not been the subject of a lot of research. The research that is available mainly deals with India’s system for elections at village level and comes up with mixed and sometimes contradictory results (see IOB, 2015c: 88-89). Likewise, information on the impact of having more women in parliament is less well researched. But also here, findings are contradictory. Various sources indicate that – and this mostly concerns the US and Western Europe and selected countries in Latin America – women are more likely to support laws benefiting women, children, and families and spending on health and education.¹⁹⁶ At the same time, having more female parliamentarians does not necessarily mean that more ‘women-friendly’ bills are passed (Htun et al., 2013: 95-97). Issues such as party loyalty are easily overlooked. Women are not a homogeneous group, but, like men, divided along the line of class, ethnicity, religion and rural/urban background – and, in this case, political parties.¹⁹⁷

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Regarding women and corruption, the evidence is once more mixed and contradictory, suggesting that ‘some caution needs to be taken in asserting that increased female participation will lower corruption in all countries’ (Alatas et al., 2006: 14). Indeed, it can be questioned ‘whether women are intrinsically less corrupt, or whether it is democracy which is the underlying condition behind the argument that more women’s participation in government is associated with less corruption. In fact, countries where women are more represented in government tend to also have more liberal democratic institutions, providing for more effective checks on corruption as well as ‘fairer systems’ that promote gender equality’ (Transparency International, 2014).¹⁹⁸

What is clear from the literature is that the impact of having more women in politics varies from country to another. It depends on the economic and political context, the rules of the parliamentary game, whether political parties are captured by elite and patriarchal interests or are linked to social, political or women’s movements and civil society. It also depends on the number of women elected, and indeed: who gets elected – a topic on which opinions differ, though with limited evidence to support them (Krook et al., 2009: 15-17; Miller et al., 2014: 5).

¹⁹⁴ See on this issue also the CEDAW Committee’s General Recommendation #23 (1997), ‘(societies) in which women are excluded from public life and decision-making cannot be described as democratic. The concept of democracy will have real and dynamic meaning and lasting effect only when political decision-making is shared by women and men and takes equal account of the interests of both’.

¹⁹⁵ See e.g. Dollar et al., 2001: 428; Horowitz, 2009: 7, 18; Blackden et al., 2006: 6 and Dufllo, 2004: 10.

¹⁹⁶ See e.g. UN Millennium Project, 2005: 104-105; Schwindt-Bayer, 2006: 1, 4-6, 10, 18 and Markham, 2013: 7, 8.

¹⁹⁷ See e.g. Bari, 2005: 6; Tinker, 2004: 231; Dekker, 2013: 50; and Pedwell, 2008: 13; 26.

¹⁹⁸ See also Esarey and Chirillo, 2013: 369, 384; Branisa and Ziegler, 2011 and Goetz, 2007.

Against this background it is not surprising that there is little evidence-based information on what works to get women into leadership positions and politics. What is clear is that women face a complex range of obstacles getting there (also see IOB, 2015c). Addressing these obstacles may require a broad approach 'that integrates social and political analysis, including of the political economy of context-specific gender equality barriers to political participation, into programming and implementation' (Domingo et al., 2012: vii). What is also clear is that a certain degree of realism on what can be achieved is required, as increasing women's political participation is a long-term process.

9.3 Dutch policies on women's political participation

Women's political participation has been on the Dutch agenda for many years.¹⁹⁹ In line with the recommendations of the UN Task Force on Education and Gender Equality in 2005, women's participation and representation in national parliaments and political bodies became one of the priorities under the MDG3 Fund. It was also an issue addressed via bilateral development cooperation and translated into cooperation with the UN and organisations such as International IDEA and the International Parliamentarian Union. The Dutch international gender policy of November 2011 refers to increasing women's leadership and political power as one of the four priorities of the Netherlands overall international gender policy (KST 32735-39, 2011). It became an objective in relation to political and social processes of change in the Middle East and Northern African (MENA) region as well as for the 15 Dutch aid partner countries. The policy letter recognised that women still constitute a minority of politics, government and the private sector and considered this a 'missed opportunity'. The term 'smart politics' was introduced to label existing policies: 'since it is proven that more women and a larger diversity contribute to better decision-making and to more stable, sustainable societies' (KST 32735-39, 2011). The literature, however, suggests that the evidence in this respect is mixed – at best.

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The objective of increasing women's political voice has been further operationalised after 2011 through the following instruments and initiatives:

- Women's political participation and leadership became the focus of the [second Dutch National Action Plan \(NAP\) to implement UNSCR 1325](#) that was signed by the end of 2011. More specifically, the second NAP suggests that activities are undertaken in areas like gender sensitising of constitutional frameworks, promoting gender quotas, and skills trainings for women (and men) to act as leaders and peace builders (NAP-II, 2011: 22-24). In line with this –debatable – notion of 'smart politics', the argument is that 'the mere presence of women can change the culture and focus of politics' (NAP-II, 2011: 23). At the same time, as observed in IOB (2015b), a clear vision of the concepts of political participation and leadership of women was never fully developed.

¹⁹⁹ For example, the budget for 2006 refers to support for reform processes in government and society, with special attention to democratisation and women's political participation' (KST 88428_2, 2005: 37).

- The theme of women's participation in political and economic processes was also considered an urgent priority for the MENA region, given the state of turmoil and civil unrest that many countries in this region went through. This view was clearly expressed in April 2011 in the Joint Statement on Supporting Women's Political Empowerment in Emerging Democracies by the Minister of Foreign Affairs together with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Following this joint statement, the US Department of State established the 'Equal Futures Partnership' by in August 2012. The Netherlands contributed to this Partnership by means of the Dutch initiative *Women on the Frontline (2013-2016)* which was launched in March 2013. The 2013 policy note on development cooperation states in this respect that 'with the new Women in the Frontline fund, we will push for greater political participation for women... Our aim is to increase the capacity of women and their organisations, enabling their involvement in drafting new legislation based on international agreements' (KST 33625-1, 2013: 37).
- Women's political participation and leadership became one of the core themes of the programme *Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women (FLOW)* that was introduced in 2012 as the successor to the MDG3 Fund.²⁰⁰ Strangely enough, the subsidy framework for the *Fund Political Parties II* that was published in April-May 2011 and endowed with a budget of EUR 32 million for the period 2012-2015, contains no reference to either women or gender.

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The attention to women in politics and women's leadership continues to date. For example, in her letter of 22 April 2013, the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation stressed the importance of strong and effective women's organisations that represent women's interests and 'demand the necessary changes in the power structures of a country to guarantee women's equal political and economic participation'. However, as observed in IOB's evaluation of the National Action Plan, 'the notion that by promoting female leadership and women's participation in peace and reconstruction processes will help to advance a gender equality' agenda is not conclusively substantiated by experience and academic findings. A key point is that 'participation does not ensure women's influence in decision making or that women in politics will give priority to a gender equality agenda' (IOB, 2015b: 53).²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ A mid-term evaluation of FLOW was conducted in 2015 (ACE Europe, 2015). It does not report on results accomplished to date as it aimed to assess to what extent attention was paid to capacity development and institutional strengthening as key elements for sustainability of the results accomplished with FLOW funding. The findings of the evaluation therefore remain outside the scope of this policy evaluation.

²⁰¹ The evaluation is at the same time supportive of the strong emphasis in the second NAP on the role of local women's organisations: supporting them is relevant when pursuing a socio-political change agenda in conflict-affected environments (IOB, 2015b: 55).

9.4 Results

Due to the fact that many of the projects and programmes on women's political participation were still ongoing at the time of this evaluation and were often implemented in highly volatile contexts such as the MENA region, it has not been possible to describe concrete results at outcome level of Dutch support for this theme.

9.4.1 Bilateral – the case of Egypt

From the four countries on which the evaluation focused for the theme of political participation only Egypt received targeted support to women's leadership and political participation. In the period 2011-2014 the Netherlands contributed the equivalent of USD 900,000 to a project implemented by UN Women's called 'Egyptian women and the democratic transition'.²⁰² Project design and implementation took place during a well-known period of major unrest, insecurity and unpredictable change, with funding restrictions imposed by a new NGO law and the quota system of additional seats for women that was abolished. Despite an increase in women voter turnout, women's share in Parliament declined to just 2% – down from some 12% during the last years of the Mubarak regime.

Desk study and interviews in Egypt indicated that adaptation to this constantly changing context was difficult. Since their legitimacy was challenged, working with government authorities – like the National Council of Women – was problematic. M&E was moreover inadequate and focused only on activities and outputs, in terms of: (i) campaigns to raise public awareness on women's constitutional rights and calling for a bill criminalizing sexual harassment; (ii) the creation of a *Women's Parliament* with some 1,000 representatives from (youth) civil society organisations; (iii) preparation and dissemination of reports and studies on perceptions, attitudes and practices on topics related to gender equality and women's empowerment.²⁰³ Support was also given for the drafting of a Gender Equality Act and a series of workshops for (i) 390 first-time women candidates and 251 campaign managers, focusing on women running for parliament; (ii) employees of the governorates, women leaders, youth, NGOs, and media focusing on electoral systems and the new Constitution and its gender related articles and; (iii) researchers of the Secretariat of the Parliament on the Constitution. Funding was also provided to a range of civil society and women's organisations that allowed them to undertake lobby, advocacy activities in relation to Articles 36 and 68 of the new Constitution that threatened women's rights and awareness raising on women's participation in politics and the training of female candidates and youth on campaigning and communication skills.

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²⁰² Total project costs are some USD 11.5 million. Other donors include Belgium, UNDP, USAID, SIDA and the EC. Dutch support was earmarked to ensure that (i) constitutional, legal and institutional frameworks reflect a gender-responsive agenda, (ii) institutions promote women's participation in elections, and (iii) gender equality advocates and their organisations influence political parties, service delivery, (social) media, and local government.

²⁰³ Topics included women's rights in the new Constitution, the legal framework for elections, voting procedures, and sexual harassment incidents taking place during the 2012 protests on the *Tahrir* square in Cairo.

No further results could be reported as the project was still ongoing at the time of the evaluation visit (2014),

9.4.2 Political participation under the MDG3 Fund

Over 50% of the 45 MDG3 Fund projects targeted women's political participation, often combined with at least one other thematic priority of the Fund. These projects focused on increasing women's skills to take up leadership positions in community based organisations and/or local politics, rather than in national parliaments. Work with and through political parties was very limited. Civic education, peer learning, making tools and curricula available and training of trainers of NGOs, of (potential) leaders and counsellors were the main activities. In some cases, they were paralleled by lobby and advocacy to shape public opinion to accept women as political actors, to vote for women in public leadership and governance positions and/or on the implementation of quotas.

The evaluation of the MDG3 Fund shows that projects have contributed to increased awareness and understanding of women's political rights, the political context in which they operate as well as local governance processes. Although no numbers are known, a contribution was also made to increased voter turnout among women and an increased presence of women in local decision making bodies reflecting that women are increasingly accepted as political actors. However, little is known of whether increased participation and women taking up leadership positions is also linked to policy outcomes that favour women's needs. As the literature points out, higher numbers cannot be equated with having more influence: long-term action is needed to build women's leadership and women's meaningful participation in local governance structures (see text box 9.1 for an example in Mozambique).

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Text box 9.1 Political participation in Mozambique

One of the objectives of ActionAid's 'Women's Land Rights in Southern Africa' project in Mozambique was to have at least 30% women in District Consultative Councils (DCCs). The idea was that this would enable them to exert influence on local development processes, also with respect to land rights. Women were trained on Council structures and governance processes as well as their political rights and were supported to participate in these Councils in six districts. The target of 30% was indeed achieved and women used their presence in the Councils to make an effort to influence them from within. The external evaluation of the project does not provide strong evidence that this has indeed resulted in changes in women's lives or had given them economic benefits. It notes that while women's presence in a District Community Council was a good start, their participation was often tokenistic and passive. More was to be done to realise change in this respect. Furthermore, an impact assessment of 2011 showed that illiteracy was a major obstacle to women's actual participation in these structures.

The evaluation of the MDG3 Fund also demonstrates that little was done to address the underlying factors that hamper women's effective political participation as explained in IOB's literature review (2015c). This particularly concerns issues like the domination of political structures by men, high illiteracy rates among women, and support for women once they are in office. From the sample of projects analysed more in-depth, only three gave longer-term support to address some of these issues by (i) investing in participatory development of a local political agenda on gender equality and providing advice on how to defend this at national level; (ii) rendering technical support to develop policy proposals for discussion in local governance bodies; or (iii) linking (female) politicians to grassroots women and human rights organisations.

9.4.3 National Action Plan UNSCR 1325

The focus of the second Dutch National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 on women's political participation and leadership has been translated into four result areas – i.e. law reform and gender-sensitive policies; national mechanisms; capacity building and National Action Plan development; and a series of projects that are financed from the budget earmarked for NAP implementation.²⁰⁴

Most of these projects deal with capacity building, which included training of (potential) women leaders, and sometimes also men, on topics like leadership, lobby and advocacy, awareness raising and public outreach. Activities also include strengthening of local partner organisations in areas like financial and organisational management, undertaking lobby and advocacy initiatives, and mass media campaigns. The other result areas are less well represented: the development of National Action Plans to implement UNSCR 1325 is only dealt with by one project in the MENA region. The result area focusing on national mechanisms (e.g. quotas) that demand and secure the presence of women at all decision-making levels is also addressed by one project only, i.e. in South Sudan.

With three exceptions (see text box 9.2), the NAP projects are still on-going and little is known of their results. A scan of project documentation and recent progress reports shows that despite modest timeframes and limited budgets, project objectives are (over) ambitious²⁰⁵ and implementing organisations have spent considerable time on getting themselves organised after project approval by the Ministry (finding suitable local partners, design of M&E systems). Also, the link between the projects and the NAP's emphasis on political participation is not always easy to establish.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ For an overview of these projects, and more details on the projects in Burundi and DRC please refer to Chapter 6 and Annex 7 of IOB's recent report on gender, peace and security (IOB, 2015b).

²⁰⁵ For example, the NAP project in Colombia aims to 'to strengthen women's participation and leadership during the peace negotiations and the post-conflict, and contribute to guaranteeing women's rights through the application of public policies aimed at preventing and protecting against the violations of those rights within the framework of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the country'. See IOB (2015b) for more information.

²⁰⁶ For example, the *Femme-au-Fone* project in the DRC and the Women and youth against violence in the MENA region are neither about women's leadership nor about political participation.

Text box 9.2 Completed NAP UNSCR 1325 projects

Afghanistan: The one-year pilot project 'Bayan' aimed to strengthen the position of Afghan women as active participants and leaders in peacebuilding and conflict-resolution processes. The idea was to realise this by stimulating dialogue among young, highly educated men and women about the role of women in society through an Internet-based SMS-based blogging platform. The project reached a large number of people, primarily male, middle-class Afghans. Women who participated in the project indicated that it had enabled them to engage in a dialogue with male peers on an equal level, which is not the case otherwise. A follow-up to the project with a budget of EUR 1.1 million for the period 2014-2016 was approved in November 2014 and is on-going.

Sudan: The project *Women's political participation Sudan* resulted, as planned, in the formulation of a programme on enhanced effective participation of women in decision-making in Sudan (i.e. the Women Leadership Programme in Sudan 2014-2016). The final report of the project *Women's leadership in Darfur* refers to outcomes in terms of (i) increased awareness of UNSCR-1325 and peace-building processes as well as of women's rights, women's positions and the importance of women's political participation; (ii) strengthened women's organisations by improving the knowledge and skills of female leaders; increasing their cooperation, participation in public activities and visibility.

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9.4.4 Women on the Frontline

The initiative 'Women on the frontline' was launched in March 2013 against the background and aftermath of the Arab Spring in terms of declining female political participation and increasing infringements of women's basic rights. It is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hivos, Oxfam and PwC²⁰⁷ with a budget of EUR 5.9 million for the period 2013-2016 and focuses on women's organisations in Bahrain, Egypt, Yemen, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Tunisia. Similar to the second NAP, Women on the Frontline focuses on the MENA region and women's political participation, with its overall objective to 'contribute to full and equal participation of women in transforming societies in the MENA region'.

The programme focuses on capacity building of women's organisations, based on the assumption that these organisations will be better able to use new and current initiatives for women's rights and women's emancipation. Part of the programme budget covers the costs of capacity building training, management, etc. The remainder serves to finance specific activities of the organisations that are supported. Lacking a clear intervention logic, the proposal is at the same time not very articulate on how strengthening these organisations

²⁰⁷ In addition, the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) was sub-contracted by Hivos to support the project's capacity development component.

will indeed contribute to outcomes formulated in the programme's logical framework analysis.²⁰⁸

Start-up of the initiative was affected by the tense security situation and the complex political context in the broad MENA region. This made the selection process of partners for the Women on the Frontline programme more challenging than anticipated, leading to a delay in the implementation of the first phase. This uncertain environment continues to have an impact to date.²⁰⁹ By the end of 2014, a total number of 28 organisations had been identified to take part in the initiative, out of which 21 had received funding to support their activities. Examples of such activities, the results of which are not yet known, are the following:

- Awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns on women's political participation (Egypt, Iraq, and Tunisia). In the case of Tunisia this resulted in 97 women applying for election observer status, while 157 women put in their candidacies to become a member at polling stations (of which 64 were recruited);
- Advocacy against proposed legislation that implies a deterioration of women's rights (Iraq);²¹⁰
- Support the development of a National Action Plan to implement UNSCR (Iraq);
- Training workshops for women standing for municipal elections and to put women's rights and priorities higher on the agenda of their political parties (Tunisia). Training was also undertaken in Yemen as part of an effort to establish a women's mentorship network that aims to promote women becoming public leaders.

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9.4.5 Support through political parties – the case of NIMD

For many years the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has provided funding to the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD). In its multi-annual plans NIMD refers to its aim of 'increasing the participation of women, young people and marginalized groups in the political process' and to a 'focus on including all groups in society that have a stake in the public good with an emphasis on women, youth and minorities' (IOB, 2010: 73; NIMD, 2011b). NIMD has a policy in which gender is considered as a 'cross cutting dimension of democracy' that is to be mainstreamed in NIMD programmes and management practices (NIMD, 2013b: 2). Its M&E framework indicates that in monitoring progress towards reaching its long-term objectives, 'NIMD aims to ensure that the data collected is gender- and age-disaggregated and includes both quantitative and qualitative data' (NIMD, 2013c: 6).

²⁰⁸ This particularly concerns outcomes such as 'Adoption and revision of constitutions, laws and policies in support of gender equality'; 'Laws formulated/revisted to criminalize all forms of gender based violence'; 'Budget allocations in support of policies to promote gender equality and national gender plans and policies formulated, resourced and adopted by relevant authorities' and 'Adoption and revision of a number of articles in constitutions and laws and policies integrating international law and lifting of a number of CEDAW' or 'Measures are in place to guarantee participation of women in political and civic processes and adoption and revision of constitutions, laws and policies to guarantee women's participation in decision making processes'.

²⁰⁹ For example, in the case of Libya, two organisations moved their HQ to either Cairo or Tunis and operate from outside of Libya for security reasons. The third organisation has stopped all activities.

²¹⁰ This concerned the proposed Jaafari law that is to replace the Unified Personal Status Law. The Jaafari law would lower the legal minimal age for girls to marry to nine years, limit possibilities for divorce and allow space for sexual violence within marriage.

Table 9.1 gives an overview of recent funding of NIMD's work.

Table 9.1 Overview of on-going NIMD projects and programmes		
Project	Budget and duration	Project information
Respect for Women's Political Rights: Fostering Political Environments for Equal Participation and Leadership of Women in Political Parties	EUR 2 million (2014-2017)	Four-year grant to work on the increased participation of women in politics in Colombia, Kenya and Tunisia together with UNDP, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) and the Centre for Multiparty Democracy Kenya. Implementation started in 2014; NIMD's annual report on 2014 provides a brief what was done during the year (NIMD, 2015: 19). Results are not yet available.
Linking Parties, Policies and People	EUR 30.1 million (2012-2015)	Echoing NIMD's proposal of August 2011 (NIMD, 2011a) ²¹¹ , the assessment memorandum indicates that together with AWEPA, 'the programme will support women's parliamentary caucuses in order to place inclusivity and gender issues high on the parliamentary agenda'. Special attention is promised for under-represented groups including women, young people and ethnic minorities, for example by developing women's secretariats of political parties' (NIMD, 2011a: 18-20). As NIMD's annual reports show, project activities are on-going. Results are not yet available.

Within the framework of IOB's evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development (2010), NIMD was one of the cases studies. The report makes few references to women with respect to activities undertaken in Bolivia, Kenya, Mali, and West Africa – however with little further quantification or analysis (IOB, 2010). For this reason, a desk study was made of NIMD's annual reports and evaluations from the period 2008-2014. Text box 9.3 provides a summary of main findings, which mainly deal with what was *done* rather than what was *accomplished*.

²¹¹ NIMD, 2011: 18-20, 36

Text box 9.3 *NIMD initiatives on women in politics (2010-2014)*

- Attention to gender and women's role in politics and development in seminars, political discussions, roundtables and debates in Benin, Bolivia and El Salvador.
- Attention to gender and women's role in politics and development through: (i) the Multiparty Taskforce on Gender in Georgia; (ii) a short-lived dialogue platform for Women Members of Parliament in Mozambique; as well as through (iii) the 'democracy schools' of the Indonesian Community for Democracy in Indonesia.²¹²
- Training of women (including members of political parties) e.g. on political communication and strategy (Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, and Kenya). In Tanzania, cross party seminars and workshops were held on women and youth and gender research was conducted with AWEPA through NIMD's Africa Regional Programme. In Ecuador, support was also given to the Political School for Women Politicians which offers training to elected women in local authorities and for a 'Train the Facilitator' project of the National Association of Rural Women which provided training to over 25 rural women leaders from different parts of the country.²¹³
- Technical assistance to strengthen the capacities of political parties, especially their offices for women, young people and indigenous peoples through the project for democratic strengthening in Colombia.²¹⁴
- Support for policy and law development related to the provisions for women's political and economic rights in Ecuador's new Constitution and a National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 in Guatemala and in Georgia for the preparation of policy papers on women's participation in the 2012 parliamentary elections.²¹⁵ In Ecuador, civil society was supported in an analysis of the law on VAW; the analysis resulted in a joint proposal that was presented to and discussed in the National Assembly.
- Other initiatives include the development of ranking systems for political parties in terms of transparency and gender equality in Colombia (with *Transparencia por Colombia*), production and airing of a documentary on women's political participation in Tanzania (with the Tanzanian Centre of Democracy), initiatives with Kenyan political parties to include women on their party lists and conduct specific training for potential women candidates.²¹⁶

²¹² NIMD, 2012; NIMD, 2013a; NIMD, 2014a; NIMD, 2014b: 15.

²¹³ NIMD, 2013a. In the case of Indonesia, by 2009, there were close to 590 students and alumni of which about 1/3rd women (Björnlund and Bahagijo, 2009: 13 and Whitehead and Killian, 2012: 5, 30, 42). With respect to Honduras, NIMD's report on 2013 refers to 'a total of 11 female candidates were elected, and while that cannot be linked directly to the training, the women indicated it had improved their communication skills and their political be linked directly to the training, the women indicated it had improved their communication skills and their political positioning' (NIMD, 2014a).

²¹⁴ Three political parties developed plans to strengthen the structures of women's and youth branches and 5 dialogues were created to include them in their regional branches (NIMD, 2014a).

²¹⁵ NIMD, 2010; NIMD, 2011b; NIMD, 2012; and NIMD, 2014a.

²¹⁶ NIMD, 2012 and NIMD, 2013a.

9.5 Conclusions and reflections

The literature shows that despite what was agreed upon internationally about women having equal rights to men – including in politics – in most countries women continue to be grossly under-represented in parliament, and central or local government. Women face major problems in getting access to political office and in getting their voices heard. This confirms the relevance of the attention paid to this issue in Dutch foreign and development cooperation policies. The absence of attention to the issue of women's political participation when launching the *Political Parties Fund* is regrettable. At the same time, the literature indicates that the evidence for 'smart politics' is limited, conflicting and biased. It does not substantiate the assumed relation between the participation of women in decision-making bodies and achieving gender-equality.

This evaluation finds only limited insight into the effectiveness of Dutch support to women's political participation. One reason is that many projects are still on-going, another is the insufficiency of M&E systems. As a result, there is information on what was *done* in terms of activities – which were generally awareness raising campaigns, capacity building of women candidates and women's organisations as well as lobby and advocacy – and information on the numbers of women reached. To a lesser extent, documents and interviews point at increased knowledge and awareness, primarily among women, an increased female turnout during elections and increased acceptance of women as political actors.

The projects also show a similarity in the instruments used, a lack of contextualised and gendered analyses of the issues at stake and little activity to address the underlying factors that hamper women's effective political participation.



10

Women, peace and security

10.1 Introduction

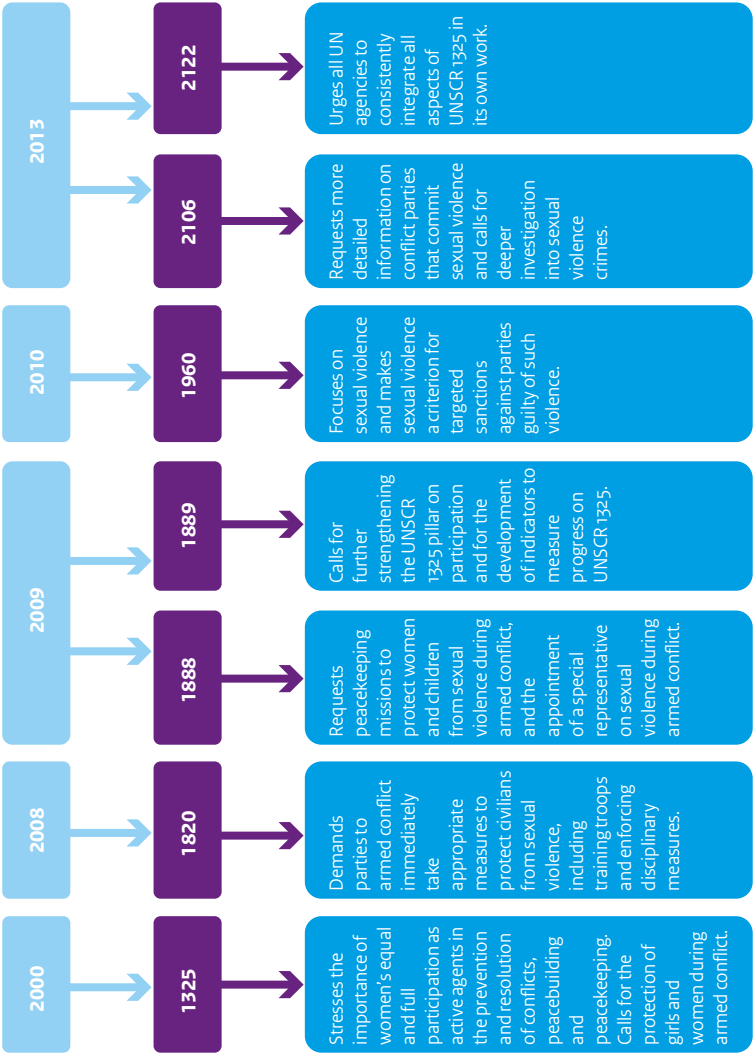
This chapter draws on findings from IOB's recent evaluation report on gender, peace and security (IOB, 2015b). It starts with a short description of the international framework related to women, peace and security, followed by an analysis of the policies that were pursued by the Netherlands. It then describes what is known of the results to date. It does so in relation to the NAP and to gender mainstreaming in the overall Dutch peace and security as it is pursued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

10.2 Women, peace and security – the issues

The UN Security Council adopted resolution 1325 in October 2000. It recognises the disproportionate effects of war and armed conflict for women. It highlights the importance of their multiple roles in conflict-affected societies: women are not only victims, but perform a variety of roles during and after armed conflict; as combatants, soldiers' wives, heads of households, community leaders, initiators of or participants in formal and informal peace processes and rebuilders of societies and states. The resolution calls for comprehensive measures to strengthen the position of women both during and after armed conflict.

The current international agenda for women, peace and security comprises seven UN Security Council resolutions. Their focus is summarised in figure 10.1. These resolutions have been the prime sources for governmental and NGO policies on women, peace and security and related M&E frameworks and for accountability of donors. They are also important for understanding Dutch policies during the evaluation period.

Figure 10.1 Overview of the UNSC resolutions on women, peace and security



This international framework for women, peace and security does not stand on its own but reinforces existing global commitments, treaties and conventions on women's rights (see text box 10.1). It is built on the three interrelated pillars (later referred to as the 3P approach) of *participation, prevention and protection*.²¹⁷

²¹⁷ See IOB, 2015b: 35. Additionally, a 4th P has been added at times concerning the *prosecution* of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based crimes.

Text box 10.1 *Other relevant international commitments, treaties and conventions on women's rights*²¹⁸

- The *Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women* (1985) which highlights for the first time the detrimental effects of VAW in every-day life for the achievement of peace.
- The *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action* (1993) which recognises that violations of women's human rights in situations of conflict are violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law.
- The *Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action* (1995) which identified women in armed conflict as one of its 12 Critical Areas of Concern.
- The recommendations made by the 42nd session of the *Committee on the Status of Women* (1998) to increase women's participation in conflict prevention, peace-keeping, peace building and reconstruction.
- The *Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court* (1998) which includes crimes against humanity and war crimes specifically against women and children.
- The *Windhoek Declaration* and the *Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective on Multidimensional Peace Support Operations* (2000) calling for a gender perspective to be adopted in peace support operations.
- The *Millennium Declaration* (2000) that refers to 'gender-aware conflict prevention and peace building'.

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10.3 Dutch policies on women, peace and security

Women, peace and security has been a topic on the Dutch agenda since the early 1990s. However, the 2006 report of the Task Force Women, Security and Conflict gave a real boost to policy development and provided the foundation for the Dutch National Action Plan (NAP) to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325. The Dutch government has clearly and consistently made a political choice to support the global women, peace and security agenda and recognised the political and strategic interest of UNSCR 1325 in this respect.²¹⁹

Since 2007, policy development on women, peace and security in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been along the following tracks:

- The two National Action Plans (NAPs) for the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325, the first for the period 2008-2011, the second for the years 2012-2015 (see text box 10.2);
- The Ministry's overall development and peace and security policies and strategies;
- The Ministry's overall gender policy of 2011 (KST 32735-39, 2011).

²¹⁸ Moreover, General Assembly resolution 60/1, adopted in 2005, acknowledges the commitment of UN Member States to women, peace and security and specifically UNSCR 1325 (A/RES/60/1) while in October 2013, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women came with its General Recommendation #30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations.

²¹⁹ It also features prominently in the general emancipation policy note of 2007 (KST 110541, 2007: 55).

Text box 10.2 *The Dutch National Action Plans for the implementation of UNSCR 1325*

In response to repeated appeals from the UN Secretary General, the Netherlands developed its first National Action Plan (NAP) on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in 2007. A multi-stakeholder approach was used in doing so. It involved representatives from government, civil society and knowledge institutes and the first NAP was launched and endorsed by 18 signatories in December 2007. It was considered as a starting point for more integrated, coordinated and, therefore, more effective cooperation between these stakeholders to implement UNSCR 1325. The Plan recognises that women have multifaceted roles in conflict and peace, are differently affected by conflict than men, and that it is necessary to give 'systematic attention to, recognition of and support for the role of women in post-conflict situations'. The scope of the first NAP was broad. It had 19 policy goals and 72 different activities that were oriented on women and were to be undertaken with existing budgets for peace and security of the signatories to the Plan. In sync with the presentation of the Dutch international gender strategy (2011), the second Dutch NAP was published by December 2011; once more a multi-stakeholder approach was followed. Its design was furthermore influenced by the findings of an NGO commissioned evaluation of 2008 and an unpublished review of 2010. The objective of the second NAP is 'to jointly facilitate the creation of an enabling environment for women's leadership and political participation in fragile states and transition countries, allowing for more inclusive, just and sustainable peace and reconstruction processes'. The Plan was to be: (i) a framework for effective and efficient multi-stakeholder cooperation; and (ii) a stand-alone Women, Peace and Security Project, supporting 'equal participation by women and men in peace and reconstruction processes at all decision-making levels' in six selected fragile states and one region (i.e. Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, DRC, Sudan and South-Sudan, and the MENA region). Gender mainstreaming was maintained as one of its core objectives and signatories committed themselves to the 'consistent integration of gender and UNSCR 1325 into all Dutch signatories' policies and actions on fragile states and (DAC) countries in transition and or peace building and reconstruction efforts in these states'. Importance is also attached to awareness raising in the Netherlands, the EU, the UN, and other regional and international bodies and their member states of the importance of gender and conflict and increased public support for UNSCR 1325. Intentionally, the NAP neither provides for detailed action plans nor for a clear M&E framework. The Ministry set aside EUR 16 million for the NAP's lifetime to undertake activities at the level of NAP focus countries/region. The number of signatories of the second NAP increased to 57 by late 2014.

IOB's evaluation of gender, peace and security (IOB, 2015b) shows that the two Dutch NAPs have ensured that the Dutch overall security policy pays attention to women and girls – although not consistently. Implementation of UNSCR 1325 has also become the guiding principle for gender mainstreaming in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' overall policy on peace and security (IOB, 2015b). This is evident from:

- The *policy letter on Security and Development in Fragile States* (KST124834, 2008), with its attention to both the 'soft' areas of human security (such as maternal health, education for girls, and VAW) and the areas of 'hard security' (i.e. from security sector reform to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration strategies). Gender remained largely a consideration for the development angle of the integrated '3D approach'²²⁰ of the government's engagement in fragile states.
- The *assessment framework for military deployment in crisis situations* that was adopted in 2009 that includes a criterion on gender – though without providing entry points in the assessment framework for actually doing so (IOB, 2015b: 38).
- The *international gender policy note* of 2011 that promotes the role of women as 'smart security', even though IOB (2015b) stresses that the assumptions underpinning this 'gender is smart security paradigm' are based on 'academic quicksand': a comprehensive review of academic literature concludes that 'there is very little literature looking explicitly at the causal linkages between gender inequality and conflict' (IOB, 2015b: 9, 26, 40-41).²²¹
- The *policy note for the 'Spearhead Security and Rule of Law'* (KST 32605-95, 2011) which makes gender an 'important element of conflict analyses' to get a better understanding of the nexus between conflict, fragility, gender and poor performance of the MDGs and calls for increased gender-responsiveness of peacekeeping operations under EU or NATO flag.
- The *policy note 'A World to Gain'* (KST 33625-1, 2013) with its focus on promoting the positive role of women in conflict resolution, reconstruction and peace keeping and combating sexual violence against women.
- It is also explicitly mentioned in a *joint letter by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Defence, and Security and Justice* of 17 November 2014 (KST 33694-7, 2014), on the comprehensive approach of peace and security.²²² This approach is essential for implementing UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820.

²²⁰ See on this issue IOB, 2013c: 36-59.

²²¹ The policy note understands gender mainstreaming as 'applying a gender-responsive 3-D approach; promoting a stronger position of women as actors in reconstruction and peacebuilding processes in fragile states; improving gender equality for the law and equal access to formal and informal justice systems within a local context; improving access to safe education, especially for girls; and, addressing the specific humanitarian needs of women and girls' (KST 32605-49, 2011).

²²² According to the letter, this integrated approach aims at sustainable recovery of stability and security by tackling both the conflict itself as well as the underlying causes. This will provide a basis for structural political, social and economic development (KST 33694-7, 2014: 1).

At the same time, attention to women, peace and security is hardly reflected in other key policy notes on the Dutch 3D approach to fragile and conflict-affected states that were presented to Parliament in 2013, i.e. the *International Security Strategy*²²³ and the letter to parliament about the *Budget International Security* (KST 33400-V-149, 2013).

Policy wise, IOB (2015b) shows furthermore that:

- Even though academic insights have emphasised a gender perspective to be critical in the effective implementation of a women-oriented agenda, Dutch policies use the terms of 'gender' and 'women' practically interchangeably, but at the same time in isolation from 'men' or broader gender dynamics.
- Whereas by 2008, women were predominantly described as a special needs group requiring support, from 2011 onwards there is increased recognition for their role as actor in peace processes. However, this has come with a more narrow focus on female leadership and political participation.²²⁴ At the same time, the existing literature does not substantiate the assumed relation between the participation of women in decision-making bodies and gender-equality.²²⁵
- Finally, there is no coherent framework that connects gender to broader peace and security objectives and positions UNSCR 1325 therein. As stated: 'There are no guidelines on how to make peace and security objectives and intervention strategies gender-responsive, no directives on how to advance gender-equality objectives and, specifically, UNSCR 1325, in a gender-responsive way, and no policy based on an understanding of how these agendas intersect' (IOB, 2015b: 40). Such guidance does not exist for other policy areas of the Ministry either.

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More specifically in relation to the NAPs, IOB (2015b) concludes that:

- Compared to other NAPs worldwide, the Dutch approach stands out with its strong emphasis on the grassroots level, and as the only NAP that is actually co-signed by both government and civil society.
- The second Dutch NAP is also one of the few plans around the world with an earmarked budget²²⁶ – but, like many others, it lacks an M&E framework as well as detailed action plans. The rationale for this, as mentioned in the NAP, is that it would allow for 'more flexible and needs-based planning and operation process and to make use of sudden opening windows and opportunities' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011: 8).

²²³ The Security Strategy mentions UNSCR 1325 once, together with the Dutch commitment to 'the responsibility to protect' (KST 33694-1, 2013).

²²⁴ This focus is also reflected in the policy note for the '*Spearhead Security and Rule of Law*' and the joint statement of the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs and the US Secretary of State on '*Supporting women's political empowerment in emerging democracies*' issued in 2011.

²²⁵ There is also no causal relationship between gender equality and peace and security.

²²⁶ This is in line with UNSCR 2122 (2013) that encourages 'concerned Member States to develop dedicated funding mechanisms to support the work and enhance capacities of organizations that support women's leadership development and full participation in all levels of decision-making, regarding the implementation of resolution 1325, inter alia through increasing contributions to local civil society' (United Nations, Security Council (2013).

- Like the NAPs of other countries, the Dutch NAPs were devised along the way. Assumptions underlying UNSCR 1325, and concurrently the NAPs, were tested in an innovative, and sometimes challenging multi-stakeholder context.
- Based on emerging insights on social and political change in fragile states and conflict-affected environments, the NAPs' 'multi-stakeholder partnership' and their demand-driven approach for supporting activities of local women and their organisations are relevant for achieving the objective of supporting women in conflict environments.

10.4 Results

Looking at results, the paragraphs below focus on the following three aspects²²⁷:

- The National Action Plans as a framework for cooperation;
- The National Action Plans as an instrument to promote female leadership and political participation;
- Integrating gender and UNSCR 1325 in peace and security activities – gender mainstreaming – by looking at a series of projects and programmes (co)financed by the Netherlands in Afghanistan, Burundi and DRC and through the UN Peacebuilding Fund.

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10.4.1 The NAP as a cooperation framework

The country working groups that were established under the aegis of the NAPs have been a key forum for cooperation. Development NGOs, diaspora organisations and migrant organisations, as well as women's and peace organisations are involved at this level. They provide information on local situations and have opened up their partner networks to the country working groups. This has resulted in a set of joint projects financed from the NAP-II earmarked budget and joint initiatives in several NAP-II focus countries.

An unintended side effect of the introduction of the budget was that the working groups have increasingly turned into forums for, often time-consuming, project preparation and coordination – with less attention paid to more strategic cooperation.²²⁸ To a certain extent this was also caused by a lack of clarity in the Ministry's selection procedures and criteria. IOB (2015b) points at competition among the signatories and more tense relationships between the bigger development organisations and the smaller women's organisations and diaspora groups. On a more positive side, members of the working groups indicate that the intense discussions and collaborations also led to closer mutual contacts and, in some instances, to new joint initiatives.

²²⁷ This is in line with findings reflected in IOB, 2015b.

²²⁸ This was also one of the reasons for the Ministry financing projects of organisations that are not part of the NAP network.

Furthermore, the budget initially did little to promote a more equal playing field. The Ministry has been making funds available since 2012 to compensate the smaller organisations for their time and effort. It also approved the establishment of a new Rapid Action & Pilot Fund to support small-scale pilot projects in 2014.

The evaluation found little trace of the involvement of knowledge institutes: they neither conducted systematic research in support of the joint NAP objectives, nor did they contribute to gender-sensitive analytical instruments and indicators, as was originally foreseen. The focus on project development and funding in the country working groups did little to retain their interest to participate. At the same time, the NAP network has missed opportunities to collaborate with the already existing Knowledge Platform on Security and Rule of Law that could potentially feed the work of the NAP network. It is understood that this has changed more recently.

Finally, although M&E of NAP implementation was identified as an increasingly important element of NAP-II, the two-tier M&E system that was promised has not been entirely put in place. The quantitative monitoring framework was dismissed at an early stage. Consequently, systematic data on numbers and types of partnerships and volumes of budgets involved are unavailable. A qualitative mid-term review was undertaken in 2013 but it was process-oriented and only reported on actions and initiatives and the process of cooperation. The struggle in the Netherlands with M&E is not exceptional – ‘NAP implementation worldwide has not been well monitored and evaluated, in the absence of specific and time-bound indicators and benchmarks, especially at the level of outcomes and impact’ (IOB, 2015b: 67). Consequently, ‘(very) little is known of the effects and impact for the populations in (post-) conflict countries or of what works and what does not – and the little information that is available indicates that there is a gap between objectives and results’ (idem).

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10.4.2 The NAPs as an instrument for promoting female leadership and political participation

Out of the EUR 16 million that were set aside for the second NAP, by the end of 2013 some EUR 8 million had been used to finance 10 projects in the six focus countries and the MENA region. With the exception of one pilot in Afghanistan (*Bayan*) and two small projects in Sudan, these projects were ongoing at the time of writing this report and results are not yet known. A review of the project proposals indicates that only the *Bayan* project has embraced a broader outlook on the dynamics between young men and women. For the other projects, it is unclear how responsive they are to gender dynamics on the ground, how an understanding of these dynamics is incorporated into project design and how they are likely to result in an improved position of women.

In addition to the projects funded from the NAP budget, there have been other initiatives by NAP signatories, both internationally and in the Netherlands. However, here too, information is limited. An attempt made during the NAP-II 2013 mid-term review to collect information on such initiatives yielded results for only 20 out of the 57 signatories. Involving the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, primarily, the Dutch development NGOs, the mid-term review shows that initiatives were undertaken in Burundi, South Sudan, and Syria and at regional level,

primarily in terms of lobby and advocacy and training. Moreover, it shows that collaboration between the different parties has been time-consuming and that it was difficult to assess whether the initiatives mentioned in the review were actually prompted by the Dutch NAP 1325 or whether they were a continuation of already existing relations.

As IOB (2015b) demonstrates, various international lobby and advocacy activities were undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with other signatories of the NAP. These include:

- A series of events on e.g. 'Women in warzones: Peace lords for change' (2012) and 'Peace: Men and women as allies' (2013), 'Taking UNSCR 1325 to the next level: Gender, peace and security mainstreaming and movements' (2013);
- Presentations (e.g. on the study 'Costing and financing of UNSCR 1325' at the Global Review of the Implementation of UNSCR 1325);
- Key note speeches at the level of the Third Committee, the Commission on the Status of Women and the UN Security Council.

Specific efforts were made vis-à-vis the women of Afghanistan and Syria. Lobby and advocacy has been an area in which the Ministry and Dutch civil society have collaborated on an equal basis, benefiting from and complementing each other's different capacities and networks.

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10.4.3 Gender mainstreaming in (co-)financed projects and programmes

For the reasons explained in the introduction, IOB's evaluation of the gender, peace and security agenda (IOB, 2015b) has focused on Afghanistan, Burundi and the DRC to see what happened to gender mainstreaming. The evaluation looked at a selection of projects financed under NAP-II and at interventions mentioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its communication to Parliament on how the Netherlands had implemented UNSCR 1325. The evaluation has also looked into the UN Peacebuilding Fund, given the size of the Dutch contribution and the fact that the Ministry regards this contribution as critical to the implementation of a gender-responsive approach to 'inclusive political processes', one of the building blocks of Dutch policy on Security and Rule of Law. The following paragraphs summarise the main findings.

Afghanistan

An evaluation of the World Bank-run *Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund* (ARTF) of 2008 found that 'there was a clear lack of gender in the policy for the ARTF' and that it was not paying sufficient attention to 'gender, conflict sensitivity and distributional outcomes' (Scanteam, 2008: 65, 67, 112). This changed in 2012, when '(gender)' had become a more visible dimension in some projects, with social sector activities providing more gender-disaggregated reporting' (Scanteam, 2012: 23). Instrumental had been the fact that the Netherlands, together with other donors as well as the Afghanistan's Ministry of Women's Affairs, had approached the World Bank to address this caveat. In line with this change, findings on programmes that were part of the ARTF became somewhat more positive as well:

- The *National Solidarity Programme* was seen as ‘the only project that systematically addressed gender issues by way of raising awareness about gender equality and women’s rights’ (Scanteam, 2012: 66; IEG, 2012: 164). Still, though increasing numbers of women joined the local Community Development Committees, they accounted for only 4% of their leadership. Gender programming was often limited to a number of small capacity development projects centred around women’s participation in meetings. An impact evaluation saw small changes in men’s perceptions on the role of women in Afghan society – but not necessarily in women’s perceptions of their own role.
- The *Education Quality Improvement Programme* witnessed increased gross enrolment of girls in primary education and increased numbers of female teachers being enrolled, but little was documented about the quality of education, progression/drop-out rates including regional/gender differences in performance, functional literacy levels, etc.’ (Scanteam, 2012: 14).²²⁹
- In line with what is also stated in UNSCR 2122 (2013), i.e. ‘that the economic empowerment of women greatly contributes to the stabilization of societies emerging from armed conflict’, the ARTF also included a micro-finance investment support facility. Around 70% of the beneficiaries of this facility were women – though not necessarily poor women (Thomson et al., 2012). An IEG evaluation refers to a positive impact on the lives of women borrowers and their families’, with women clients pointing to ‘improved roles in contributing to business decisions and a positive impact on women clients’ participation in the household economic decision-making on food, utilities, health, education and clothing’ (IEG, 2012: 163).

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The UNDP-led *Law and Order Trust Fund* that ‘was intended to strengthen law and order institutions and thereby increase the level of public trust in these institutions and reduce the perception of corruption’ (Thomson et al., 2012: 30). Several gender-related initiatives were undertaken to increase the representation of women within the police services and to strengthen the ability of the police to deal effectively with gender issues. Evaluations of 2009 and 2012 refer *inter alia* to the establishment of women-targeted recruitment initiatives and of a Gender Mainstreaming Unit in the Ministry of Interior and an increase in the number of Family Response Units.²³⁰ Still, though considered important, little money was spent on gender issues. In the end, the number of female regular police officers increased from 232 in 2005/06, to 1,387 by November 2008 but fell again to some one thousand by the end of 2010.

²²⁹ See also NORAD evaluation department, 2012: 58, 64; and IEG, 2012: 160-162.

²³⁰ These units were set up to deal with domestic violence and potentially play a ‘valuable role’ in ‘sensitising the police to issues of domestic violence’ (Athos Consulting, 2009: 40). They were identified as ‘successfully accomplishing the twin goals of providing positions particularly well-suited to female police personnel and aiding in broader goals of providing women with access to broader and formal police services’ (Athos Consulting, 2012: 34).

Burundi

The World Bank led *Multi-country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme* (MDRP) in the Great Lakes region financed initiatives in the areas of demobilisation, reinsertion, and reintegration support to special groups. Since 2008, the programme is split up into national programmes in the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi. Like in the case of the ARTF, gender was only taken on board after partners in the programme, including the Netherlands, had repeatedly asked that the MDRP's gender dimension be properly addressed. This finally happened late into the programme. The 2010 evaluation observed that the MDRP's gender dimension 'was not translated into practical approaches within most of the programmes' (Scanteam 2010: 33). The final programme evaluation considered the results regarding demobilisation of female ex-combatants as 'disappointing'.²³¹ In the end, women accounted for only some 2% of project beneficiaries as a result of the eligibility criteria that were used, even though UNSCR 1325 calls for attention to the different needs of female and male ex-combatants in DRR programmes.²³² Also, inadequate attention had been paid to trauma suffered by female ex-combatants as a result of gender-based violence (World Bank, 2009: 23).

With respect to the Dutch bilateral Security Sector Development programme (2009-2017), IOB (2015b) shows that the position of women featured in the training of army and police personnel. It also found that funding was set aside for making sure that a gender dimension was incorporated into national defence policies, programmes and budgets and to strengthen the role of female staff in the police in order to increase the quality and efficiency of services for the population. A recent assessment report reveals positive results in these areas, but there is still an 'awareness' that needs to be widened and at the practical level a lot of work needs to be done' (DSU, 2013: Annex 1-5).

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Democratic Republic of Congo

The sexual violence pillar of the Stabilisation and Recovery Funding Facility in the DRC sought to coordinate all UN agencies and NGO activities that were conducted under the UN-led comprehensive strategy for combating sexual violence (2009). This strategy focused on multi-sectoral responses (combining health care, psycho-social assistance and social and economic reintegration), prevention and protection, fighting impunity, data collection and security sector reform. IOB (2015b) reports that various studies have questioned both the underlying strategy and the programmes financed. Questions were also raised with respect to the potential impact of the strong focus on punishing perpetrators of violence against women as well as on the fairness of the legal system prosecuting them (Douma and Hilhorst, 2012: 11).

²³¹ See also Cordaid and WO=MEN, 2010: 11.

²³² Various sources show that the issue of women's eligibility for this type of DRR programme is not new (UNIFEM, 2004: 4, 8; El Jack, 2003: 28-29, 31 and UN Secretariat, 2010: 9).

Findings are also critical with respect to the 'Gender and Justice in Maniema programme' that was assessed as part of a broader *Clingendael* study of the gender-responsiveness of sexual violence assistance in DRC (Smits and Cruz, 2011). The study questioned the exclusive orientation on female victims of violence and the programme's sustainability, two reasons being the documented lack of cooperation and failure to cross-reference the approach with local organisations, and the monopoly position of the consortium implementing the project (Heal Africa and the American Bar Association).²³³

United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)

The Netherlands contributed the equivalent of over USD 60 million to the PBF in the period 2007-2012, making it the Fund's third largest donor. The Fund consists of:

- The Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Facility – to support 'a structured peacebuilding process, driven by national actors based on a joint analysis of needs with the international community' that is focused 'on objectives that have direct and immediate relevance to peacebuilding' within one or more of the four priority areas of the PBF (UNDP, 2010: 2); and
- The Immediate Response Facility – which finances critical, urgent interventions on a one-off basis for which other funding sources are not available and is designed to jump-start immediate peacebuilding and recovery needs (UNDP, 2010: 2).

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Implementing the UN's women, peace and security agenda is one of the Fund's objectives. It was to enact the Secretary-General's promise to double the share of funding for projects that promote women's specific needs, advance gender equality, and/or empower women, by October 2012. A target was set to allocate 15% of all funds to women's empowerment programmes.²³⁴ Also the Netherlands has asked for acknowledgment of the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peace building measures. A Gender Promotion Initiative was launched in June 2011 to address gender equality concerns in the PBF's programmes. Gender-marked planned expenditures increased from 6% to close to 11% in 2012, but went down again to 7.4% in 2013. This shows 'that additional measures and support are needed to help UN Country Teams address gender' if the PBF is to meet the target of spending 15% of its total resources for gender programming (Kluyskens and Clark, 2014: xix, 76, 79).

²³³ IOB (2015b) states in this respect: 'There is a 'catch 22' to the substantial funding of Heal Africa's sexual violence programme. While health care services for sexual violence have developed much further than other local health services, it has been allowed to do so at the expense of inclusivity and sustainability. Funding this particular programme, and with such a large amount, has meant that only women who claim to be victims of sexual violence will have access to the assistance provided by Heal Africa and the ABA' (IOB, 2015b: 113).

²³⁴ The PBF review of 2014 is critical about this 15% target, since 'what is needed is a systematic focus on how PBF's country portfolios respond to women's peacebuilding needs' (Kluyskens and Clark, 2014: 75).

While various reports on the PBF mention that many women related topics were addressed in its activities in the years 2007-2013 (from gender-related legal reforms to the training of women as political leaders), an independent thematic review of 2014 (O’Gorman, 2014) raises concerns about insufficient consideration of ‘gender’ in the selection and allocation of PBF funds and in the UN policy dialogue with government counterparts and civil society. Also the 2014 PBF review found that gender is ‘not systematically reported upon, making it difficult to assess the impact of programmes’, while few UN agencies have a ‘strong and explicit ‘gender and peacebuilding’ approach’ (Kluyskens and Clark, 2014: 62, 74, 76). Moreover, the Fund focuses predominantly on ‘women as beneficiaries’ but less so on ‘women as peace builders’, though some good examples of ‘gender sensitive local programming’ were identified (Kluyskens and Clark, 2014: xix, 76).

Finally, a desk review of PBF evaluations indicates that the evaluations of several country programmes have nothing or little to say on either gender equality or on women. Other evaluations give a mixed picture, which is generally limited to numbers of women participating or benefiting: issues of gender equality are not addressed and information on women’s actual benefits is lacking. This state of affairs was confirmed in interviews in New York.

10.5 Conclusions and reflections

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The two NAPs were prepared during the evaluation period reflecting the Dutch commitment to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325. The Plans have been important for incorporating attention to women – both as victims and as actors in (post) conflict and fragile states – in Dutch mainstream peace and security policies, although not always consistently. Moreover, there is no coherent framework that connects gender to broader peace and security objectives and positions UNSCR 1325 therein.

The NAPs have been considered as a framework for cooperation among its signatories. This has by and large been successful. The introduction of a NAP budget as lobbied for by the civil society partners of the NAP has, unintentionally and temporarily, resulted in a focus on programmatic operations (i.e. project preparation and coordination) rather than more strategic cooperation. The knowledge institutes have by and large withdrawn from the cooperation. Cooperation among signatories, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at a diplomatic level and in terms of awareness raising on women, peace and security has been one of the success stories. From 2012 onwards, the NAP budget has served to start a series of projects in the broad area of female leadership and political participation. Most projects are still ongoing and results are not yet available. Whether they will prove to be responsive to gender dynamics on the ground and will result in an improved position of women is unknown.

In terms of gender mainstreaming, the evaluation shows that, irrespective of international agreements, the tools that exist on e.g. gender and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration or security sector reform, women were easily disregarded in large-scale programmes in (post) conflict and fragile states. Benefits tend to be small and concern only few women. Attention to women was factored in too late and too little as is evident from the findings of the Multi-country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme in the Great Lakes region in Africa and the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. Along the same lines, there has been little trace of attention to women in the projects and programmes financed under the UN Peacebuilding Fund. There has been insufficient consideration of 'gender' in the selection and allocation of PBF funds and in the dialogue with government counterparts and civil society. This calls for a more critical examination of programmes that are proposed for co-funding and persistent demands on multilateral organisations to live up to their gender promises. By contrast, the position of women featured in the Dutch bilateral Security Sector Development programme in Burundi from the beginning. Recent reports mention positive results, but there is still a long way to go.

Annexes

Annex 1 About IOB

Objectives

The remit of the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) is to increase insight into the implementation and effects of Dutch foreign policy. IOB meets the need for the independent evaluation of policy and operations in all the policy fields of the Homogenous Budget for International Cooperation (HGIS). IOB also advises on the planning and implementation of evaluations that are the responsibility of policy departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and embassies of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Its evaluations enable the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation to account to parliament for policy and the allocation of resources. In addition, the evaluations aim to derive lessons for the future. To this end, efforts are made to incorporate the findings of evaluations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' policy cycle. Evaluation reports are used to provide targeted feedback, with a view to improving the formulation and implementation of policy. Insight into the outcomes of implemented policies allows policymakers to devise measures that are more effective and focused.

Organisation and quality assurance

IOB has a staff of experienced evaluators and its own budget. When carrying out evaluations, IOB calls on assistance from external experts with specialised knowledge of the topic under investigation. To monitor the quality of its evaluations, IOB sets up an external reference group for each evaluation, which includes not only external experts, but also interested parties from within the ministry and other stakeholders. Moreover, IOB appoints a number of IOB-evaluators for each evaluation to act as peer reviewers. IOB's evaluation policy and guidelines for evaluation are available on the IOB website, hard copies can be requested through the IOB-secretariat.

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Programming of evaluations

IOB consults with the policy departments to draw up a Ministry-wide evaluation programme. This rolling multi-annual programme is adjusted annually and included in the Explanatory Memorandum to the Ministry's budget. IOB bears final responsibility for the programming of evaluations in development cooperation and advises on the programming of foreign policy evaluations. The themes for evaluation are arrived at in response to requests from parliament and from the Ministry, or are selected because they are issues of societal concern. IOB actively coordinates its evaluation programming with that of other donors and development organisations.

Approach and methodology

Initially IOB's activities took the form of separate project evaluations for the Minister for Development Cooperation. Since 1985, evaluations have become more comprehensive, covering sectors, themes and countries. Moreover, since then, IOB's reports have been submitted to parliament, thus entering the public domain. The review of foreign policy and a reorganisation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1996 resulted in IOB's remit being extended to cover the entire foreign policy of the Dutch government. In recent years it has

extended its partnerships with similar departments in other countries, for instance through joint evaluations and evaluative activities undertaken under the auspices of the OECD-DAC Network on Development Evaluation.

IOB has continuously expanded its methodological repertoire. More emphasis is now given to robust impact evaluations implemented through an approach in which both quantitative and qualitative methods are applied. IOB also undertakes policy reviews as a type of evaluation. Finally, it conducts systematic reviews of available evaluative and research material relating to priority policy areas.

Annex 2 Summary Terms of Reference

Introduction

The terms of reference for this policy evaluation follow the Order on Periodic Evaluation and Policy Information of the Ministry of Finance of 2012. Two main reasons motivate this evaluation. First of all, the last evaluation on women's rights and gender equality was published in 1998 (IOB, 1998). Secondly, the concept of gender equality has remained a key theme in Dutch development aid policy and continues to have a separate objective in the Ministry's budget.²³⁵

Gender equality policies on the Dutch foreign affairs agenda

Women's rights and gender equality issues have been on the Dutch foreign affairs agenda for over three decades. For many years, the key principle of the Dutch position has been that women's rights are universal human rights; cultural and religious traditions and diversity are no excuse for disrespecting these rights.

Since the late 1990s, Dutch development aid policy has been characterised by a two-track gender equality strategy combining a stand-alone track and a mainstreaming track. The stand-alone track aimed at the 'empowerment' of women and has been translated into support for the women's rights movement, capacity development of women, and support to policy development on women-specific issues in partner countries. This stand-alone track came under operational target 5.3 of the Ministry's budget.²³⁶ During the evaluation period, funding has been set aside under this operational target for the MDG3 Fund (2008-2011), the programme Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women (FLOW) for the years 2012-2015, Dutch bilateral support in a range of partner countries, the National Action Plan to implement UNSCR 1325 (2008-2011 and 2012-2015) and the Dutch contributions to UNIFEM/UN Women and the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women. The second track consisted of gender mainstreaming, which is about incorporating attention to women and gender issues into foreign and development cooperation policies and programmes in order to make sure that women benefit. It particularly concerns the following priority themes:

- *Women's rights as human rights and combating violence against women*
- *Basic education*
- *Water and sanitation*
- *Women's political voice*
- *Women in conflict prevention and resolution*
- *Women as economic actors*

²³⁵ For the complete Terms of Reference, see <http://www.iob-evaluatie.nl/gender>.

²³⁶ After 2012 this was changed into budget line 3.2 of the budget for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation.

The Netherlands has used multilateral, bilateral and civil society channels to realise its aims with respect to women's rights, gender equality and combined diplomacy, using the same channels, with financial support.

Evaluation focus, central questions and approach

Though gender mainstreaming is to take place in all areas of foreign policy and development cooperation, it is impossible to address the entire portfolio covered by these policies. The evaluation can only *illustrate* different experiences in supporting gender equality in different contexts. It will therefore focus on the themes mentioned above and a purposively selected sample of projects in Bangladesh, Egypt and Mozambique. These countries have been bilateral partner countries for many years, have a comparatively large budget for support to women's equality organisations, a set of interventions that deal with some of the above priority themes and are also included in the MDG3 Fund.

The evaluation will answer the following overall evaluation questions:

Description and motivation of the role of the government in this area

- 1) What has motivated the Dutch Government to assume an active international role in addressing gender issues?

Description of the policy objectives

- 2) What have been the aims and main characteristics of the Ministry's overall international gender equality policy and the strategies used to realise these aims and what are the links with the Netherlands' national emancipation policy?

Description of the instruments employed

- 3) Based on this international gender policy, has gender equality been incorporated into country and thematic policies and into concrete interventions and gender-equality focused approaches and is this evident in the different stages of the policy/programme cycle?

Analysis of the outcomes of instruments employed

- 4) What were the results of these interventions in terms of providing better conditions for women and have these results been sustainable?²³⁷

Description of budgets and expenditures, structures, procedures and human resources

- 5) What were the financial and institutional resources to implement the Ministry's gender equality policy and were these used efficiently?²³⁸

²³⁷ Indicators will be sector specific, depending on the characteristics of the different 'empowerment pathways'. In addition, the evaluation will look at results in terms of output, and, whenever possible, of outcome.

²³⁸ The evaluation will provide information on gender-related budget expenditures recorded in the Ministry's financial management system in the period 2007-2013.

Approach

To address these overall questions, the evaluation will focus on the key themes that appear in the above short reconstruction of the Dutch gender equality policy.²³⁹ The approach to these themes will be based on the following sources of information.

		Policy reconstruction and institutional analysis	Women's rights as human rights	Education	Political participation	Water & sanitation	Women, peace and security	Women as economic actors
Desk study	Policy and project documents							
	Financial data							
	IOB evaluations							
	Other evaluations							
	Academic + grey literature							
	Websites, databases							
Interviews	Ministry of Foreign Affairs							
	Other ministries							
	Other Dutch institutions							
	(international) NGOs							
	Contracted management organisations							
	External experts							
Field research	Desk study							
	Interviews; focus groups							

Desk study will concern: (i) *documents of the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Education, Science and Culture* (policy documents, letters and other information flows to Parliament, financial data and annual plans and reports of selected Ministry departments and embassies and project and programme documentation); (ii) *evaluation reports*, i.e. existing independent evaluations of acceptable quality²⁴⁰; and (iv) *other documentation*, including documents prepared within the framework of the MDG3 Fund, UN documents on human rights and

²³⁹ For more information, please refer to the full Terms of Reference available on IOB's website: <http://www.iob-evaluatie.nl/gender>.

²⁴⁰ These will include (a) IOB evaluations; (b) evaluations conducted by the Ministry of Defence; (c) evaluations of bilateral and multilateral programmes that were (co-)financed in Afghanistan, Burundi, DRC and Rwanda; (d) other evaluations on Dutch supported interventions in the area of economic development; and (e) programme evaluations of civil society interventions co-financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

UNSCR 1325 issues, evaluations on gender equality conducted by other countries, relevant websites and databases and academic and grey literature.

Semi-structured interviews will be held with staff of the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Education, Science and Culture, MFS organisations, international NGOs, organisations contracted to manage centrally financed programmes and external experts.

Field visits are foreseen within the framework of the evaluation of the MDG3 Fund, bilateral projects for women's equality organisations and for selected land right interventions under the umbrella of women as economic actors. Field visits will take place to Bangladesh, Egypt and Mozambique. Field visits will entail desk study of documents, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups.

Limitations

Achieving gender equality is a complex and long-term process. Interventions in this area are generally of a qualitative nature. They take place in highly variable socio-economic and cultural contexts. Linking inputs (specific interventions) directly with outcome and impact is virtually impossible. It will also be challenging to demonstrate a causal link with what was done with Dutch (co-)financing.

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It is unlikely that the evaluation can be extended to include impact. Effectiveness measurement is therefore limited to outcome level – i.e. did supported interventions provide results that were (better) accessible to women and were women able to make use of these results in an equitable way as compared to men. In relation to efficiency, the evaluation will be limited to an assessment of the costs of project and programme management in relation to the results accomplished and the costs of the way in which projects and programmes were implemented.

Organisation and products

The policy review is the responsibility of IOB. IOB staff will be internal peer reviewers. A reference group will be set up to comment and advise, both in writing and during meetings. IOB's Deputy Director will chair the reference group. External consultants will be recruited for specific tasks, i.e. for part of the study of bilateral interventions and the MDG3 Fund, the studies on Women, peace and security and the Dutch NAPs UNSCR 1325 and for the bilateral interventions on women and land rights. Detailed terms of reference will be prepared for each assignment.

Four products are foreseen: (1) the overall IOB policy evaluation report (in English); (2) a separate 50 page Dutch summary of the evaluation report; (3) a report on the evaluation of the MDG3 Fund; and (4) a report on the evaluation of the NAP UNSCR 1325. IOB will present the reports to the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation with the suggestion to send it to Parliament together with a policy response.

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Annex 4 Interviews

The Netherlands		
Name	Function	Organisation
Anten, L.	TFVG	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Baron, A.	Former staff member TFVG	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Bentvelsen, K.	Consultant	Femconsult
Besant, R.	Regional Director East & Southern Africa	Search for Common Ground
Buringa, J.	Former staff member gender unit	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
De los Santos, A.	Former staff member gender unit	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Dijksterhuis, R.	Former head gender unit	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Dueren, I. van	Former head TFVG	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Esch, W. van	BIS	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Geuskens, I.	Executive Director	Women Peacemakers Programme
Goudsmit, T.	Secretary Stability Fund	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Hilhorst, D. J. M.	Professor	Wageningen University
Hoenen, J.	Former staff member gender unit, former coordinator NAP	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Kaasjager, S.	Gender focal point DVB	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Kant, E.	Gender adviser	ICCO
Kesselaar, S.	Former NAP coordinator	WO=MEN
Klein, F.	Programme officer	Oxfam Novib
Klugt, F. van der	Gender focal point DSH/HO	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Krijnen, M.	Head TFVG, former coordinator NAP	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Laan, C. van der	Head DSH/HO	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Manders, J.	Consultant	Femconsult
Maters, A. M.	MDG3 Fund management	Price Waterhouse Coopers
Meyboom, C.	Member	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
Moalim, I.	Gender focal point DSH	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Moquette, M.	Former staff member TFVG	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Osse, P.	Executive director	Wage Indicator Foundation
Peters, M.	TFVG	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Pol, I. van de	Former staff member gender unit	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Rijn, J. van	TFVG	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Siebes, R.	DSO	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Slettenhaar, R.	Policy officer EKN Kinshasa	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Spreeuwenberg, J.	TFVG	Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Netherlands		
Name	Function	Organisation
Sprenger, E.	Independent consultant, member of the appraisal commission of the MDG3 Fund	
Strop - Von Meijenfeldt, T.	Head	Platform Vrouwen & Duurzame Vrede
Suralaga, D.	Policy officer	Cordaid
Verbaken, K.	International Cooperation consultant	Consultora
Vogels, M.	Former staff member EKN Maputo	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Wal, F. van der	IGG	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Wiegman, F.	MDG3 Fund management	Price Waterhouse Coopers
Wormgoor, R.	Strategic policy officer DSH	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Zaat, A. M.	Programme officer	Stichting Sundjata

United States of America		
Name	Function	Organisation
Brinkman, H-J.	Chief Policy, Planning and Application Branch	Peacebuilding Support Office
Deif, F.	Deputy Manager United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women	UN Women
Groenen, R.	Chief, Ending Violence Against Women	UN Women
Jong, A. de	Director Resource Mobilisation	UN Women
Mazzacurati, C.	Planning and Application Branch	Peacebuilding Support Office
Mehrotra, A.	Senior advisor on Coordination and Focal Point for Women in the UN system	UN Women
Munster, L. van	First Secretary, Deputy Head Economic and Social Affairs, Permanent mission of the Netherlands to the UN	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Salmela, K.	Policy specialist, Peace and Security Section	UN Women
Staaïj, A-M.	Policy officer Global Study on the implementation of SCR 1325	UN Women

Bangladesh		
Name	Function	Organisation
Abul Khair, M.	Manager Capacity Building, Improvement of the Real Situation of Overcrowding in Prisons	GIZ
Afroj Chumki, M.	Minister	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
Ahmed, F.	Head of Programmes	ASF
Ahmed, S.	Executive director	ASF

Bangladesh		
Name	Function	Organisation
Akhter, S.	Justice and Good Governance department officer	Polishree
Akther, M. B.	Programme manager	Oxfam GB
Ara, Z.	National Coordinator	We Can Alliance
Begum Niru, M.	Board member	STEPS
Begum, M.	Director Health	Nari Maitree
Choudhury, R. K.	Executive director	Campaign for Popular Education
Das, T.	Former staff member EKN Dhaka	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Faisal Khan, M.	Head of Operational Management	ASF
Fiaz Rashid, S.	Dean	James P. Grant School of Public Health
Hhabibur, R.	Chairperson	STEPS
Hossain, A.	Director	Multi Sector Programme on Violence Against Women Bangladesh
Kabir, N.	Coordinator Monitoring and Evaluation	ASF
Kamal, S.	Chairperson	We Can Alliance
Karmaker, R.	Executive director	STEPS
Khan, R.	Programme Officer Development Coordination	SIDA
Kujur, S.	Senior programme officer	CREA India
Kumar Jha, V.	National Community Action Coordinator	GIZ
Miles, R.	Principle Adviser, Rule of Law Programme	GIZ
Mitra Neogi, B.	Programme Coordinator	Manusher Jonno Foundation
Moshin, A.	Board member	STEPS
Reza, S.	Manager Livelihood and food security	Polishree
Saha, M.	Head of programme coordination	RDRS
Saha, R.	Director	STEPS
Satiar, M.	Policy officer SRHR and gender EKN Dhaka	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Sengupta, P.	Programme Coordinator Governance and Rule of Law	GIZ
Siddique, A.	Vice Chancellor	Dhaka University
Sultana, N.	Project coordinator	Nari Maitree
UI-Islam, T.	Secretary general	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
Ullah Khondoker, M.	Medical doctor	
Voogd, E. de	Policy officer SRHR and gender EKN Dhaka	Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Burundi		
Name	Function	Organisation
Andrews, G.	Chef de mission	ZOA
Bosco, M. J.	Titulaire du service foncier communal	Commune Nyamurenza - Province Ngozi
Gahungu, B.	Chargé de programmes Biraturaba	
Gihugu, D.	Chargée du programme foncier	SDC
Habwintahe, J. M.	Executive director	APDH
Irakunda, J.	Agent foncier communal	Commune Kiremba - Province Ngozi
Kaneza, F.	Administration officer EKN Bujumbura	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Lankhorst, M.	Evaluateur programme foncier	
Macumi, D.	UC/PFC	
Miburo, G.	Administrateur communal	Commune Kiremba - Province Ngozi
Munezero, C.	Chef de projet foncier Ngozi (DDC)	SDC
Muringa, G.	Programme officier public finance EKN Burundi	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Musolini, N.	Assistant service foncier communal	Commune Nyamurenza - Province Ngozi
Ndabarushimana, D.	Assistant de projet Ngozi (DDC)	SDC
Ndikumana, E.	Ministère de l'Eau, de l'Environnement, Aménagement du Territoire et Urbanisme	
Ndikumasabo, A.	Chef de mission	DDC
Ninaahaze, E.	Point focal	AFJB
Nindorera, L-M.	Chef de mission	Global Rights
Niyongabo, B.	Chargé des programmes	ODEB
Niyonger, N.	Chargée du programme genre et inclusion sociale	ACORD
Niyonzima, D.	Administrateur communal	Commune Nyamurenza - Province Ngozi
Niyonzima, E.	Programme officer food security EKN Bujumbura	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nkoripfa, C.	Point focal foncier	Ministère de la Solidarité Nationale
Nkurunziz, A.	Chargé du programme foncier	FIDA
Nshimirimana, D. F.	NPO Foncier	SDC
Oppewal, J.	Ambassador EKN Bujumbura	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Rasolo, N.	Programme officer SRHR EKN Bujumbura	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Vlaar, J.	First secretary food security EKN Bujumbura	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Vliet, M. van	First secretary SRHR EKN Bujumbura	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Wennink, B.	Evaluateur programme foncier	

Egypt		
Name	Function	Organisation
Abbawi, R.	Second secretary EKN Cairo	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Abdallah, A.	Project coordinator	MADA
Abdallah, N.	Artist	
Abdallah, S.	Former community development facilitator	Programme on harmful practices Cairo
Abdel Hamid, M.	Head of board	Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement
Abdelgader, H.	Director	Egyptian Foundation for Family Development
Abol Komsan, N.	Egyptian Centre for Women's rights	
Adly, M.	Director	El Nadeem
Ali Salem, M.	Secretary-General	Woman And Development Alexandria
Ali, S.	Executive management of female development programmes	
Alkholy, K.	Project manager	MADA
Bodran, H.	Board member	Egyptian Feminist Union
Dewedar, R.	Programme manager	MADA
El Adly, N.	Director for International Cooperation Department	NCW
El Fawal, S.	Second secretary for gender and human rights issues EKN Cairo	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
El Messiri, G.	Former senior policy officer for gender and human rights issues EKN Cairo	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
El Nakkash, F.	President	FWID
El Sawi, N.	Member of staff	FWID
El Shafai, E.	Executive Director	FWID
El Shafai, S.	Volunteer	WLP
El Taweel, A.	Researcher	Al Ahram Study centre
Farag, A.	Director of Egypt Programs	V-Day Karama
Farghali, A.	Legal advisor	Egyptian Foundation for Family Development
Farid, F.	Collaborator/crew film production	ACT Communication Techniques for Development
Fatah, A.	Lawyer, trainer and lecturer for LPJ projects	
Fathi, M.	Lawyer and lecturer for LPJ programmes	
Felfela, R.	Former head of NCW project	NCRC
Gaafar, H.	Chairman of the board and consultant in conflict transformation	MADA
Ghanem, S.	Assistant project manager	Egyptian Feminist Union
Gohar, N.	Programme Manager	UN Women Cairo

Egypt		
Name	Function	Organisation
Harrington, C.	Senior Programme Officer for Advocacy & Communications	WLP
Hassan, A.	CDF Cairo	
Kadri, N.	Project Coordinator	WLP
Kamel, A.	Communication techniques for development, supporting the FOU DA initiative	ACT
Kamel, A.	Media realm coordinator	ACT Communication Techniques for Development
Khafagy, F.	Gender officer	AAW
Khaled, M.	Member of staff	FWID
Korayek, R.	Programme Analyst	UN Women
Mahmoud, M.	Programme Coordinator Head Office	
Marie, A.	Economic realm coordinator	Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement
Mhosen, R.	Former head of NCW project,	NCRC
Mohamed, H.	CDF Cairo	
Morsy, M.	CFO	V-Day Karama
Morsy, M.	Programme Officer	V-Day Karama
Morsy, M.	UNDP, formerly UN Women	
Moustafa, H.	Programme Assistant	V-Day Karama
Nour El Din, A.	President	Women and Development Alexandria
Osman, H.	Founder and CEO	V-Day Karama
Rafea, N.	Research and analysis associate	UN Women
Rutta, C.	Governance associate	UN Women
Said, A.	Director	Heya Foundation
Saleh, N.	Journalist for El Ahrām	
Sawi, A.	Electoral expert and trainer	
Selem, M.	Assistant at the Presidential Office	NCW
Shukri, S.	Teacher of literacy classes and trainer for legal support	Egyptian Foundation for Family Development
Soliman, A.	Director	CEWLA
Suliman, A.	Major from the Department of Human Rights	Ministry of Interior
Thanaa, S.	Project manage	Egyptian Foundation for Family Development
Vaill, S.	Director International Advocacy and Planning	V-Day Karama
Varga van Kibéd, R.	Deputy chief of mission EKN Cairo	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Waheeb, N.	Project manager	Egyptian Feminist Union
Zohney, S.	Youth initiative associate	UN Women

Mozambique		
Name	Function	Organisation
Alfredo, J.	AGIR programme officer Swedish Embassy	SIDA
America, S.	Member	Avodemo
Antunes, E.	Programme Officer Gender, Social Protection and HIV/AIDS EKN Maputo	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Baleira, S.	Former FAO project coordinator	CFJJ
Caetano, C.	Programme official	ORAM Nampula
Candinho, M. L. J.	Member	Avodemo
Catela, I.D.	Project officer	NAFEZA
Chinde, M.	Coordinator HIV/Aids prevention project	NAFEZA
Colete, F.	Gender coordinator	ORAM Nampula
Conceição Júnior, P. de	Programme officer Environment, including AGIR Danish Embassy	DANIDA
Cossa, I.	Coordinator	Associação Kindlimuka
Cossa, M.	Economic Alternatives Coordinator	ActionAid Mozambique
Covela, A.	National Partnerships, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator	ActionAid Mozambique
D'Uamba, P.	Programme officer PSD and Gender focal point Danish Embassy	DANIDA
Da Silva, D.	Director	LAMBDA
Dos Santos Sefame, C.	Database coordinator	ORAM Nampula
Dumangane, S.	Governance and mobilisation officer	N'weti
Ernesto Chiteleca, C.	Previous gender coordinator & women workers' representative	OTM
Fiore, A.	Programme officer Justice programme Danish Embassy	DANIDA
Høgberg-Hoe, C.	First Secretary Norwegian embassy	NORAD
Huesken, J.	Head Development Cooperation EKN Maputo	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Jordão, C.	Senior Policy Officer Sustainable Development EKN Maputo	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Kumbarba, F.	Coordenador for Cabo Delgado	ORAM Nampula
Liture, B.	Staff member	AMMCJ
Machava, R.	Director	MULEIDE
Mangue, D.	Former gender focal point	CFJJ
Mapinde, M.	Officer	Magariro
Marole, E.	Programme Officer Gender, Social Protection and HIV/AIDS EKN Maputo	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Menezes, I.	Multimedia officer	N'weti

Mozambique		
Name	Function	Organisation
Milauculo, A. R.	Administrator	NAFEZA
Monteiro, M.	Programme officer	N'weti
Muianga, E.	Programme Officer	ActionAid Mozambique
Munguambe, C.	Member of the women's union & coordinator for gender	OTM
Naidoo, B.	Rights programme officer Swedish Embassy	SIDA
Namburete, D.	Executive director	N'weti
Nhampuala, G.	Research and M&E officer	N'weti
Nhonjo, R.	Resource mobilisation officer	N'weti
Norfolk, S.	Director	Terra Firma consultancy
Ofumane, E.	President	AMMCJ
Paónde, A.	Head of international affairs department	OTM
Pedro, O.	Project officer	NAFEZA
Pontavida, R. M.	Psychosocial assistant	NAFEZA
Quintano, C.	Director	NAFEZA
Ribeiro, C.	Delegado	ORAM Nampula
Ricardo, L.	Financial assistant	NAFEZA
Ricardo, L.	Administrator	ORAM Nampula
Sande, J.C.	Membro da Associacao são Francisco Mopeia, animador de PCR	
Serra, C.	Former director	CFJJ
Silveira, I.J.	Gabinete para a promoção e desenvolvimento da mulher/Gabinete da Mulher (GPPDM)	
Simango, D.	Youth representative / coordinator for youth committee	OTM
Sundila, G.F.	Delegate member	Avodemo
Tanner, C.	Former technical advisor	FAO land rights Mozambique
Tsiranonaki, M.	Project coordinator	ITUC
Ubissee Ussumana, S. M.	Project officer	NAFEZA
Vaz Raposo, E.	Country coordinator	Wageindicator Mozambique
Vilanculos, F.	Consultor	Associação Kindlimuka
Vilaninto, L. A.	Contabilista	ORAM Nampula
Vugt, A. van	AGIR coordinator	Oxfam Mozambique

Annex 5 Brief history of Dutch policies on women's rights and gender equality (1950-2007)

Introduction

This annex provides a brief historical overview of the attention to gender equality and women's rights in Dutch development and foreign policies in the years preceeding the evaluation period: 1950-2007. The overview shows that current policies have quite some similarities to those of earlier years. This concerns especially (a) the emphasis on human rights combined with attention to the different types of violence that are committed against women as one of the cornerstones of Dutch policies; (b) the focus on health and reproductive aspects through important aid flows in support of SRHR; (c) a two-track policy consisting of simultaneously mainstreaming gender and a stand-alone track in support of women's rights and organisations.

The early years (1950-1990)

As in other countries, it has taken some time for women to get a place in Dutch development aid policies since the first policy notes of the 1950s. The first World Conference on Women (Mexico, 1975) gave an important push for the Netherlands to incorporate 'women's emancipation' in its policy note of 1976. This document called for more attention to the role of women, especially in rural societies, in the preparation of development programmes and support for activities for women's emancipation, making the Netherlands a 'pioneer in incorporating a gender perspective in field development cooperation' (Roggeband, 2009: 68). The policy note that appeared in 1979 stated that specific attention was to be paid to women's economic position in the targeting of Dutch aid on the poorest strata in developing countries.²⁴¹ Moreover, the human rights policy of the same year stressed that in the choice of Dutch aid partner countries, the position and rights of women would be included. Important to note is that 1979 was also the year in which the Netherlands agreed to the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) (see text box 0.1).

²⁴¹ See also Landman and Abraham, 2004: 132.

Text box 0.1 *The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*

CEDAW was agreed upon at the UN General Assembly meeting of 18 December 1979. The Netherlands signed the Convention in July 1980 and ratified it in July 1991.²⁴² Article 2 of CEDAW obliges parties to the Convention to: (a) embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation ... and to ensure ... the practical realization of this principle; (b) adopt appropriate legislative and other measures ... prohibiting all discrimination against women; (c) establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure ... the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination; (d) refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation; (e) take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organisation or enterprise; (f) take all appropriate measures, ... to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women; (g) repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

The Convention also obliges state parties to take appropriate measures to make sure that women can exercise and enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal footing with men (Article 3). They are moreover expected to 'modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women' (Article 5).

The Articles 6 to 16 furthermore call for appropriate measures to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women, to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life and to eliminate discrimination against women in the fields of education, employment, social security and services, health care, and other areas of economic and social life as well as in all matters relating to marriage and family relations. Finally, in Article 28, the Convention mentions that states can send the UN Secretary the text of reservations made by them at the time of ratification or accession but that reservations that are incompatible 'with the object and purpose of the present Convention' are not permitted.

²⁴² CEDAW succeeded the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (DEDAW) of 1967 and incorporated an expansive definition of discrimination against women, which extended governments' human rights responsibility into both the 'public sphere' and the previously excluded 'private' spheres of family and community life' (Gaer, 2009: 62). Moreover, unlike DEDAW, CEDAW was legally binding on its signatories.

The CEDAW Committee is one of the UN's treaty committees and has a mandate to watch over the progress for women made in the countries that have signed the Convention. The Committee also monitors the implementation of national measures to counteract discrimination against women. The Committee, comprising 23 independent experts, including one from the Netherlands until 2010, discusses reports that state parties are expected to submit to the UN Secretary-General on the measures that they have adopted to give effect to the provisions of the Convention and on the progress made in this respect. Since 1993, the Netherlands has presented several of such reports, primarily on the state of affairs in the Netherlands.²⁴³ A shadow report, prepared by organisations that cooperate in the Dutch CEDAW Network, accompanies the official report.

Since December 1999, an Optional Protocol to the Convention is in force that provides the CEDAW Committee with the mandate to hear petitions and complaints of individual citizens, groups of individuals and NGOs about violations of the Convention. This Protocol put the Convention on an equal footing with other international human rights instruments that have individual complaints mechanisms. The Netherlands played an important role in the development of this Protocol and ratified it in 2002.

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A first policy note dedicated to 'Women in Development' appeared in 1980 with four priorities: (a) give women more influence and allow their participation in preparation and implementation of aid activities; (b) promote their increased economic independence; (c) strengthen women's organisations and (d) develop information and communication among women in developing countries. The policy note made women an integral part of all development policies (IOB, 1998: 16, 91). With the publication of a new note in 1984 a call was made to gain insight into conflicts of interests and power differences between women and men²⁴⁴ and to enhance the participation of women and women's organisations in e.g. agricultural and industrial development.²⁴⁵ The two-track policy was made explicit: mainstreaming women into existing development aid policies plus support for projects that specifically targeted women, including support for women's organisations.²⁴⁶ To undertake such projects, a so-called 'Women's Programme' (later called Women's Fund) was introduced in 1986 with an initial budget of Dfl 2 million which increased to Dfl 45 million by 1995,

²⁴³ Since 2007, coordination of the Dutch emancipation policy is with the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. The Minister, de facto Minister of emancipation, has a managing role in the realisation of CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action in the Netherlands, reports to CEDAW every four years, and, on behalf of the Dutch government, responds to comments and recommendations of the CEDAW committee. The reports to CEDAW primarily recapitulate the main features of the Dutch overall gender policy. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science attends CEDAW committee meetings and also sits on the Commission on the Status of Women. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has responsibility for drafting the international paragraph of the overall emancipation policy.

²⁴⁴ See on this issue also the policy note 'Kwaliteit, een voorzet voor de jaren '90' (1989).

²⁴⁵ Similar statements appeared in the policy note 'Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Werkgelegenheid' (1984).

²⁴⁶ This made the Netherlands one of the early adopters of this dual strategy of mainstreaming plus a stand-alone track.

before it was abolished in 2002.²⁴⁷ An action programme 'Women and Development' was drafted in 1987 and the main aim of the Dutch policy became the structural improvement of the economic and social position of women in developing countries by promoting their active participation in the development process (IOB, 1998: 93).²⁴⁸ However, this policy note contained few references to unequal power relations between women and men. Unlike in earlier years when the policy was based on the principle of equal opportunities for women, instrumentalist arguments dominated this action programme: women's participation was expected to increase aid efficiency (IOB, 1998: 110).²⁴⁹ The two-track strategy of mainstreaming and special projects was nevertheless maintained, with a preference for the first track. Regrettably, an evaluation of the programme of 1991 showed a considerable amount of policy but insufficient translation into practice.

From 1990-2007

1990-1998

'Women and Development' became one of the main policy themes of Dutch development cooperation with the publication of a new policy note in 1990. The notion of women's autonomy was reintroduced as the 'space for women to shape their social and personal life on the basis of their own conditions and priorities' (IOB, 1998: 17; 96). Four dimensions were distinguished in this respect: (a) physical (women's physical autonomy, sexuality and fertility); (b) economic (equal access to and say over means of production); (c) political (voice, self-determination) and (d) socio-cultural (own identity and sense of dignity). Once more, the strategy to implement the policy consisted of mainstreaming of women and development in the entire aid portfolio plus projects specifically targeting women. The same principles were echoed in the policy note that appeared in 1993. This was the very same year in which combating violence against women was reconfirmed as a Dutch aid priority. 1993 also was the year in which the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women was adopted by the UN General Assembly and in which a special rapporteur in the Human Rights Committee on gender discrimination and violence against women was appointed. Combating violence against women was thus mainstreamed in the Dutch human rights discourse: women's rights were recognised as human rights, in conformity with the outcomes of the UN Human Rights conference that was held in Vienna 1993.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ In 1992, some 20% of the Fund was relegated to the gender experts at the Dutch embassies. For many years, about 50% of the Fund went to Women's World Banking, UNIFEM and INSTRAW.

²⁴⁸ Specific reference is made to e.g. increasing women's access to means of production, their increased participation in decision making at household, community, state and international level, the strengthening of women's organisations, and combating physical violence and sexual abuse (IOB, 1998: 93).

²⁴⁹ On the importance of participation and the role of women in the development process see also the policy note 'Kwaliteit, een voorzet voor de jaren '90' (1989).

²⁵⁰ Article 18 of the Vienna Declaration reads as: 'The human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on the grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community'. Furthermore Article 7.1 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998 refers to 'Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity' as crimes against humanity.

The 4th World Conference on Women of 1995 (see text box 0.2) provided 'a fresh impetus' for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to adopt a gender mainstreaming strategy which resulted in some modifications of the policy on women (IOB, 1998: 101). One year later, a major reshuffle of Dutch foreign policy was implemented. This was accompanied by a drive towards decentralisation and a process of de-compartmentalisation (*'ontschotting'*) of aid and foreign affairs. This made the gender policy applicable to all activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, rather than just for the part working on development cooperation (Walters, 2006: 20). The attention to women's participation in (political) decision-making, macro-economic policies, women and armed conflict, problems of girls, inheritance law, SRHR and violence against women increased, with a special focus on partner countries in Africa. The state of these countries' gender policies became one of the elements in their selection for bilateral aid (KST 35777, 1999: 50-51)²⁵¹ although, in practice, compliance with this criterion was not applied consistently (IOB, 2006: 58).

Text box 0.2 *Beijing 1995 and the Platform for Action*

The 4th World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace was held in September 1995 in Beijing.²⁵² At this Conference, the UN Member States committed themselves to implement an agenda for women's empowerment: the Platform for Action. This Platform deals with removing the obstacles to women's participation in all spheres of public and private lives through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making.

Its Article 44 mentions twelve critical areas of concern, i.e.: poverty; unequal access to education and training, health care and related services; violence against women; the effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women; inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources; inequality in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels; insufficient mechanisms to promote the advancement of women; lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women; stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems; gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment; and persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child.

²⁵¹ See also KST 42733, 1999: 8-9; KST 36522, 1999: 160 and KST 36391, 1999.

²⁵² Beijing was preceded by the World Conferences of Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985). In Nairobi, 'new ground was broken when issues of violence against women, particularly domestic violence, were addressed in a human rights context' (Gaer, 2009; Pietilä, 2002).

²⁵³ See e.g. Mehra and Gupta, 2006: 1; Waal, 2006: 209; Nanivazo and Scott, 2012: 5 and Brouwers, 2013: 10.

²⁵⁴ The first review (Beijing+5) took place in June 2000; Beijing+10 was held in March 2005 and Beijing +15 took place in March 2010. On gender mainstreaming within the UN see e.g. Woodford-Berger, 2004: 66.

With gender mainstreaming as the main strategy in the above mentioned critical areas of concern,²⁵³ the Platform commits nations to carry out concrete actions in these areas, with the ultimate goal of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women in both public and private life. Implementation of the Platform for Action is a matter for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and is reviewed every five years.²⁵⁴ While it is mainly a government responsibility, other institutions in the public, private and non-governmental sectors are called upon 'to take strategic action' as well. According to Gaer (2009) '(the) 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women not only grounded the problems facing women in the language of human rights. Beijing went beyond positive affirmation of equality rights found in the earlier world conferences on women by specifically identifying and condemning violations of those rights and demanding accountability for the violations' (Gaer, 2009: 65).

1998-2002

Policy wise little happened until after the publication of IOB's evaluation report in 1998 which solicited an extensive reaction from the Minister for Development Cooperation (KST 32565, 1998).

In this reaction, as well as in policy papers that appeared in subsequent years, the Minister reconfirmed (a) the focus on increasing women's autonomy; (b) the continuation of the two-track approach – which became popular also in other countries – with support for women through specific projects and the integration of women's interests, basics needs and participation into mainstream development cooperation²⁵⁵; (c) the continued importance of the instrumentalist approach: reducing inequality between men and women was not only a woman's right but was of great importance for sustainable development and poverty reduction (KST 36522, 1999: 42; KST 45940, 2000: 60).

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Referring to the need for external support for the priority areas of the Platform for Action of 1995, the focus would be on realising and enforcing equality of men and women before the law; combating violence against women; SRHR; gender and conflict prevention, resolution and reconstruction²⁵⁶; gender and poverty alleviation, economics and social policy and the

²⁵⁵ See also KST 36522, 1999: 60-61, 156; KST 45940, 2000: 60; and OECD, 2001: 46. Women in development was also to be a cross-cutting theme in the different forms of macro aid (KST 47518, 2000: 31 and KST 36522, 1999: 58, 160). Gender mainstreaming was also to be pursued in international organisations of which the Netherlands was a member (KST 40097, 1999: 2). A combined women's rights and instrumental approach appears in those days: 'Recognition grows that reducing inequalities between men and women is not only a women's right but is of key importance for sustainable development and poverty reduction' (KST 36522, 1999: 60-61).

²⁵⁶ Attention to the position of women in conflict situations is already apparent from e.g. KST 40097, 1999; KST 45940, 2000: 99, and KST 55561, 2001: 47 which refer to strengthening the role of women in conflict prevention, mediation and post conflict situations. The policy note on Post-conflict reconstruction emphasises that violent conflicts within and between states are not 'gender neutral' and emphasises the role of women in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction (KST 61690, 2002: 13). From 2002 onwards, increasingly reference is made to UNSCR 1325 of October 2000 (KST 61941, 2002: 58 and KST 77487-2, 2004: 69).

effects of macro-economic change on the position of women; and women's participation in (political) decision making and good governance.²⁵⁷ These priorities were reconfirmed after the Beijing+5 review that showed that continued support in these areas was still needed (KST 36522, 1999: 60-61, 104). While gender issues also featured in a range of policy notes on subjects ranging from sports to Africa and macro and sector aid²⁵⁸, no new or revised gender policy was formulated during the 1998-2002 ministerial period. It is furthermore worth recalling that at international level, gender equality was recognised as part of the overall strategy to reduce poverty at the UN Millennium Summit that was held in September 2000, even though the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) only focuses on a few aspects (see text box 0.3).²⁵⁹

Text box 0.3 Gender equality and the MDGs

MDG3 is about gender equality and women's empowerment and the first target for this goal is about eliminating 'gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015'. Women and girls also appear in relation to MDG 1 (Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people) and MDG 2 (Achieve universal primary education: Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling). MDG 5 (Improve maternal health) refers to reducing maternal mortality by three quarters.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ KST29770, 1998: 156 and KST 36522, 1999: 60-61. The Netherlands also underlined the importance of gender budgeting, integration of gender aspects in national poverty strategies, sector programmes, and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, and the use of gender-sensitive instruments like poverty and social impact analyses (KST 61941, 2002: 90, 101-102). According to Whitehead (2003), gender and PRSPs were not a happy marriage: '(gender) issues appear in a fragmented and arbitrary way in the body of the PRSPs dealing with policy priorities and budget commitments' and 'women's voices have hardly been sought and have definitely not been heard' (Whitehead, 2003: 36-37). See also Collinson et al., who refer to the emerging of gender sensitive second generation PRSPs (Collinson et al., 2008: 5, 21, 23).

²⁵⁸ See e.g. KST 29669, 1998: 7; KST 36522, 1999: 58, 160; and KST 61941, 2002: 101-102.

²⁵⁹ The UN Millennium Declaration itself is at the same time broader and talks about: Men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice; No individual and no nation must be denied the opportunity to benefit from development; The equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured; To promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable; To combat all forms of violence against women and to implement CEDAW.

²⁶⁰ As observed in Rodenberg (2004), 'members of the DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) have criticized the fact that '(no) specific objectives are stated that put a figure on the political and economic empowerment aimed for. Improvements in the unequal economic situation of women, measured in terms of their share of paid work in the non-agricultural sector, are not linked to quantitative indicators. The goal of increasing the proportion of women occupying decision-making positions, in parliaments in this instance, is linked neither to a timeframe nor to the 30 % goal set by UNIFEM' while the structural and macro-policy goal (MDG8) 'ignores the gender dimension' (Rodenberg, 2004). Moreover, Painter (2004) refers to the faces of women in the MDGs as 'predominantly those of a girl child, a pregnant woman, and a mother' (Painter, 2004: 21).

2003-2007

To the surprise of Parliament, the new policy note that appeared in October 2003 (KST 70604, 2003) contained *no* reference to gender and only two to women, leading Walters (2006) to conclude that ‘high level interest, let alone championing of gender equality and women’s empowerment at the mainstream policy level have disappeared’ (Walters, 2006: 18).

Later on, it was explained that the two-track approach would continue,²⁶¹ combining gender mainstreaming and emancipation, while the Women’s Fund was abolished and support for women’s organisations would only be possible through one of the Ministry’s programmes for co-financing activities of NGOs and through Dutch embassies supporting NGOs at country level (KST 91585, 2005: 103-104).²⁶² The position was that separate funding was no longer needed as ‘gender’ was, supposedly, something which was ‘in the hearts and minds of all Ministry staff’.²⁶³

The trend in the Netherlands was similar to what happened in other countries:²⁶⁴ implementation of gender mainstreaming went hand-in-hand with decreasing budgets for specific gender projects or women’s organisations, and a decline in gender equality infrastructures and internal gender expertise (Roggeband, 2013).

The international paragraph of the Dutch overall emancipation policy of 2006 (KST 93480, 2006) linked the priorities of the Dutch national policy to the priorities of its foreign relations agenda: security (women’s rights, SRHR), economic independence and labour market participation, social participation and decision-making, i.e. increased attention to women’s political participation, also in (post) conflict situations (KST 93480, 2006: 43-44). The policy note refers to systematic integration of the equality of women and men in all international dossiers, in policy dialogue as well as monitoring and evaluation; systematic attention to women in peace keeping operations and integration of gender in international peace, reconstruction and security policies; structural attention to the position of women in developing countries (KST 93480, 2006: 44-46). It is realised in this respect that working

²⁶¹ See KST 71698, 2003: 9-10; KST 68259, 2003: 98; KST 75163, 2004: 9; KST 80598, 2004: 68 and KST 91585, 2005: 117. In 2004, it was moreover argued that the policy’s priority themes (i.e. education, SRGR, environment and water) had been chosen because of the positive effects of interventions in these areas for gender equality (KST 75163, 2004: 9).

²⁶² This position differed from what was stated in 2003 – when it was realised that evaluations had demonstrated that women’s empowerment was necessary for achieving gender equality (KST 72099, 2003: 79) and 2004 on the financing of activities specifically targeting women’s empowerment (see KST 72099, 2003: 98 and KST 80598, 2004: 66). See further Rees, 2005: 559 and Rao and Kelleher (2005), referring to the separation of gender mainstreaming from women’s empowerment work as ‘the most pernicious misunderstanding’ of gender mainstreaming’ (Rao and Kelleher, 2005: 61). The wisdom of this decision was questioned in 2006 (KST 99333_2, 2006).

²⁶³ The assumption was that staff ‘was able and willing to correct their gender bias’ (Roggeband, 2009: 67). The Netherlands was no exception to this as observed in Smyth, 2007: 586.

²⁶⁴ See e.g. Rao and Keller: ‘The architecture of organisational structure, process, policy, and funding to support women’s empowerment and gender equality is being eroded also at international and national levels’ (Rao and Keller, 2005, 58).

with women's rights organisations is a condition to keep equality on the agenda and to demand quality of aid programmes (KST 93480, 2006: 46).

It is finally important to recall that gender equality was not only a theme in Dutch development aid – it was also to figure as an important element in the Dutch overall foreign policy.²⁶⁵ However, while an assessment panel (*Visitatie Commissie*) on emancipation appreciated the way in which the gender perspective was integrated into development aid policies, it found that much was still to be gained in other areas of foreign policy in 2005.²⁶⁶ This was recognised in a letter of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of February 2006 (KST 94691, 2006). At the same time, it was observed that a visible start had been made in other policy areas, in particular human rights (including socio-economic rights) and, following adoption of UNSCR 1325, in the area of peace and security (KST 94691, 2006: 2-3).

Against this background, a new Minister for Development Cooperation came into office in February 2007.

²⁶⁵ See KST 77487-2, 2004: 68-69; KST 93480, 2006: 43 and KST 99333_2, 2006 which refer to systematically anchoring of gender in foreign policy and identifies specific areas where the Netherlands could make a difference: compliance with human rights agreements, poverty reduction for sustainable development and in relation to conflict situations.

²⁶⁶ In its Peer Review of 2006, OECD was pleased with the broad international involvement of the Netherlands in gender issues and the influential role it had played in mainstreaming gender into the UN system and international financial institutions, but questioned the tendency to neglect 'the overarching intention of MDG3 and its other indicators, as well as the gender dimensions in all the other MDGs' (OECD, 2006: 40-41).

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This policy evaluation of the Dutch international gender policy covers the period 2007-2014. One of the key foundations of this policy has been the principle of equal rights for women and men. Nevertheless, the evaluation found that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has struggled with mainstreaming this principle into foreign and development aid policies and putting it into reality. Moreover, information on the results

is limited. The report calls for increasing gender sensitivity, for analysing women's specific constraints, needs and priorities and for coming up with relevant solutions and interventions. It underlines the importance of a long-term commitment to gender equality coupled with a sensible dose of realism on what effectively can be accomplished.

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