

Lessons Learned in the course of the Gender Scorecard Process

Elaine McKay, Gender Scorecard Consultant 7 July 2005

1. These lessons learned should be read in conjunction with the Strengths and Weaknesses section of the narrative report. This section makes clear that an UNDAF that too closely follows the conceptualisation and framework of the Government's national development policies will reflect the same weaknesses. It should not be the role of the UNCT to confirm these weaknesses but rather to lead on international best practice.

Recommendation 1: The Guidelines for the preparation of UNDAF refer to planning for the good of the country which in some cases will not be following the policies of the Government too closely. UNCTs must strike a balance between demonstrating support for the Government's policies and at the same time offering the Government approaches as alternatives or improvements.

2. I was briefed by UNIFEM RO in Bangkok and Phnom Penh, and the RCO and the UN Gender Theme Group that they wanted a scorecard assessment of all agencies' programmes, while the UNDG wanted only "joint programmes" assessed. Since the Scorecard process is being done in the context of preparing for the CCA/UNDAF, and therefore will be setting the direction for the UNCT for the five years 2011-2015, it made more sense to do the latter. This is a much bigger job and the scorecard questions and indicators don't fit comfortably when applied to the agencies' work. I fully appreciate that they were not designed to do so and that a gender audit would have been more appropriate – however the RC et al used the opportunity of the scorecard for the purpose of the CCA/UNDAF which is indeed one of the intentions of the UNDG.
3. UNCT Cambodia added a further term of reference for me: to provide a short report on how the UN agencies can coordinate, harmonise and align their gender related work through the development of a cohesive gender framework to contribute to the achievement of the UN Working as One.
4. In the end, I have written one report for the UNDG and the way forward reflects the needs of the UNCT in Cambodia with regard to the CCA/UNDAF and the better promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in Cambodia. Ratings were made for Joint Programs only and were not officially recorded for agencies' work. Since the agencies did their own ratings, this process was on one hand, a consciousness raising exercise and on the other, an information gathering exercise for me on which to base my recommendations for the Cambodian UNCT's Way Forward.

Recommendation 2: It would be desirable if a gender audit/rapid assessment were an integral part of the CCA and if a gender specialist were engaged as part of the CCA team.

Recommendation 3: All agencies should be required to undertake regular gender audits and report to their headquarters with consequences for performance appraisal for HOAs and staff.

5. I believe the purposes of the Scorecard as stated in the Introduction to the Users' Guide were largely met despite the confusion which is discussed below. However, these stated

purposes appear to be very general when compared with the subjects that were probed by the indicators and make the reason for some of the indicators a mystery.

It appears that the scorecard is being made to serve several purposes, not only in Cambodia but also in NY. It seems to be based on an ideal represented by the One UN concept (though this is in operation in only a few countries). Is it the UNDG's intention to promote joint programmes through the Scorecard process? Is the Scorecard part of a wider agenda of moving towards One UN with the aim of promoting gender mainstreaming within the One UN concept? If these are the intentions, they should be made explicit. The questions should be better focused on the current situation in specific countries, especially non One UN countries, and the questionnaires and indicators re-designed accordingly.

Recommendation 4: The underlying assumptions of the Scorecard should be explicit. If the focus of the Scorecard is rating joint programmes, this should be clearly stated and the questionnaire and indicators simplified and focused to reflect this target.

5. Joint programmes are popular with some agencies in Cambodia and not others, and joint programming is similarly regarded. The transaction costs are very high, demanding detailed coordination from dedicated people. Some HOAs are more in favour of buying into a government programme for coordination along with a range of other donors and NGOs/INGOs with government doing the coordination, albeit with TA. Others prefer to support a programme based approach together with the "big" donors (banks and bi-laterals) and see the UN's role as providing expertise, rights focus, or neutral-agent-as-advocate roles, to influence the direction and contribute to development in these ways. These latter two approaches can have the same defined basis or be different.

Recommendation 5: Joint arrangements should be allowed to develop as part of the coordination, harmonisation and alignment processes. These are likely to vary with countries and the role of HQs and UNDG should be to collect good practice rather than define too precisely the criteria and process to be followed.

6. As a result of these differing views and approaches to coordination, there are very few joint programmes in Cambodia and they don't make much of an impression on achieving the goals of the National Strategic Development Plan. The UN's real contribution and support for the NSDP is made by individual agencies' programmes.

Recommendation 6: If the purpose of the Scorecard is to contribute to CCA/UNDAF in line with national development policies, the clearest way to go is via an assessment in association with the CCA but conducted by a gender specialist (as I have recommended in Rec 2 above), including an analysis of documents, programmes and reports, and a rapid assessment of agencies' gender work. It should be anticipated that this work will take about four weeks.

7. I'm not very comfortable with the aggregation of scores per dimension because the joint programmes in Cambodia are at such different stages of development. One is very mature and successful (HIV/AIDS), one (Creative Industries) is so new that it is just past the procurement stage. Another (Response to Avian and Human Influenza) is totally gender blind

but in other respects is considered a model of its kind. I believe that this (Influenza) programme should be gender responsive because 90% of poultry- raising is done by households and this work is the domain of women and children. Household hygiene is also seen as primarily the role of women. I have made these points to the UNCT.

8. I understand that the UNDG may want to make global comparisons but I doubt that they will be very meaningful. Furthermore, the idea of rating programmes (like football teams) against each other is not very productive and can generate hostility.

Recommendation 7: Collecting case studies of good practice rather than ratings would be a more constructive way to proceed. The term scorecard rating system can then be discarded.

9. Despite all of this, I am recommending to the UNCT that they establish a Joint Support Programming for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (JUST for Gender!) chaired by a new appointment of a Senior Gender Coordinator in the RCO with the secretariat provided by UNIFEM. I'm also recommending that all agencies (or at least the big ones) establish a Gender Mainstreaming Group chaired by the Deputy HOA and with representation from all programmes and sections in the agency. These GMGs would absorb the Gender Focal Points. Further, the UNCT should constitute itself twice a year as the UN Gender Theme Group and hear and comment upon reports from the JUST.

Recommendation 8: Gender work should be a required section in RC's annual reports and should address the achievement of targets and indicators.

10. The reason for these recommendations is that it is clear that gender mainstreaming is not advancing in the UN for a number of reasons and one of them is that there is no effective machinery to drive it. In Cambodia, at the level of most agencies, there are no effective mechanisms for planning and accountability to ensure gender mainstreaming happens either in the agencies themselves or under the UNCT umbrella.

11. The implications are that although HQs have policies regarding gender equality and women's empowerment, these policies in only some cases are being taken seriously and transformed into country plans.

12. Gender mainstreaming is a function of good planning and good management and should be seen as such by RCs and HOAs and their performance appraisals should reflect this dimension.

13. Gender mainstreaming should not be an option in the CCA/UNDAF and gender responsive indicators should be mandatory.

Recommendation 9: Gender mainstreaming as the process for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment should be an integral part of the CCA/UNDAF process and in the training and performance assessments of RCs and HOAs.

14. Because UNIFEM Cambodia at the moment doesn't have a Country Coordinator, I have been asked by the UNIFEM Regional Director to stay on to represent her (the Regional Director) at the Steering Committee and UNCT meetings through the CCA/UNDAF process. This is

probably very necessary to ensure that gender doesn't disappear without a dedicated champion. I will be staying until mid November which is the end of the process in-country.

Recommendation 10: Engendering the CCA/UNDAF process needs monitoring and championing from start to finish by someone recognised in this role by the UNCT. This can be the UNIFEM Country Coordinator if the position exists. If not, someone with sufficient knowledge and status should be contracted for this role.

15. In Cambodia the UNCT is rather like the UNGA. "Real" work is done by commissions/agencies except for a very few issues such as security. The RC has a representative function but does not command the team. In addition, his office has an extraordinarily small budget. The UNCT has recently considered whether to move towards "Delivering As One" but is cautious and is desirous of reading about the lessons learned from the pilots and the others that have taken this initiative. It decided not to move in this direction at this time. As stated in the narrative report there are a variety of ways in which greater coordination is being tested by members of the UNCT and perhaps this is an alternative approach to harmonisation and alignment and may be a way to build a common vision, create "islands of trust", and gain experience in coordination, harmonisation and alignment. Meanwhile there are sectors and issues that remain in a state of disharmony or are not being adequately addressed which means that the host country becomes the victim of the UN and other donors inability to get their act together. Gender is one of these issues.

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