Gender Policy Review Report (Final draft) 2013

A review report of the DMCDD Gender Policy, by Dorthe Skovgaard Mortensen
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- Israelmissionen/The Palestinian Bible Society (Palestine),
- Bibelselskabet /Bible Society of Zambia (Zambia),
- IAS and Kandua Restoration Bible Church (Nigeria), Sanjaranda Bible College and Rural Training Centre (Tanzania)

Dorthe Skovgaard, May 2013

Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>DMCDD</td>
<td>Danish Mission Council Development Department</td>
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<td>DMOs</td>
<td>Danish Member Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAD</td>
<td>Gender And Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>PME</td>
<td>Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>POs</td>
<td>Partner Organizations</td>
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<td>WID</td>
<td>Women In Development</td>
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1. Executive summary

The DMCDD Gender Policy:
In 2009 DMCDD adopted its present Gender Policy in which DMCDD, members and partners agree to work for the promotion of gender equality and the attainment of equal rights for men and women.

The review:
The aim of this review has been partly to examine and document the general use of the Gender Policy in day to day work among DMCDD’s staff, external consultants (panel consultants), DMOs and POs and thus assess the policy’s effectiveness in relation to gender sensitive programming, and partly to assess the policy in relation to latest developments in approaches to gender equality and integration into rights based methodologies.

The review has been carried out between March and May 2013 as a desk review using a mix of quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies including document review, questionnaires, focus group discussions and semi structured interviews.

Overall findings:
Application and Effectiveness: The direct application of the DMCDD Gender Policy in the DMCDD financed projects is found to be limited, but the incorporation of the policy into the Mini-program guidelines and application formats has, together with a greater attentiveness to gender at the DMCDD secretariat, indirectly contributed to increased gender reflections and awareness among DMOs and POs. However, it is evident that the majority of project documents lack coherence between gender analysis, objectives and indicators of gender equality, and gender sensitive intervention strategy, just as they lack appropriate gender monitoring and evaluation, and strategic advocacy for men’s and women’s equal rights and access to services, resources and decision-making.

A more effective application of the Gender Policy will require a strategic plan for how to translate the policy into practice by operationalizing its principles in terms of gender sensitive formats, gender sensitive project assessment tools, gender sensitive technical advice to DMOs/POs and capacity building of DMCDD staff and DMOs.

Furthermore, on a more principle note, it will be essential to determine the status of the Gender Policy, i.e. does the official commitment made by DMCDD, members and partners to integrate gender equality into their activities require to be enforced, or should the policy merely be a non-binding inspirational document?

Relevance: Attention to gender equality is agreed to be essential to professional development practice and the review finds that the applied Gender and Development (GAD) approach, as opposed to a Women in Development (WID) approach, is a relevant and up-to-date policy approach. Likewise, the applied advocacy
approach is acknowledged as an important means to promote gender equality, especially if based on a more explicit human rights-based approach.

However, the inclusive, generic and wordy nature of the Gender Policy is considered to influence its users’ notion of relevance. The policy document suffers evidently from having a too broadly targeted audience, and from being too verbose, too theoretical and too little straight-to-the-point, and the user/reader will, as a consequence of the elaborate gender considerations/reflections and the unclear structure, easily loose direction and fail to apply and implement the otherwise relevant approach to gender equality.

**Overall recommendations:**

DMCDD is recommended to:

- Determine the status of the Gender Policy and make a strategic plan for its operationalization.
- Revise the policy document to be more concise and better structured.
- Narrow down the targeted audience of the Gender Policy to be DMCDD and the DMOs who apply funds from the Mini-program in order to ensure the relevance and effective application of the policy.
- Revise application/report formats and guidelines to ensure that project logframes contain gender sensitive outcomes, outputs and indicators and will reflect changes in gender, and to create coherence between the different levels of analysis, strategy and M&E.
- Develop simple and practical gender assessment tools to be used by DMCDD staff (and external panellists) in counselling and screening of projects.
- Provide elaborate technical advice to DMOs/POs in the areas of gender analysis, development of gender specific indicators, and data collection and documentation of cases regarding gender inequality in order to strengthen strategic advocacy.
- Build the capacity of DMO by strengthening their conceptual understanding of gender, their ability to reflect and respond to gender issues, and their ability to operationalize the policy through technical skills.
2. Introduction
This report presents the review of the DMCDD Gender Policy (2009). The review was commissioned to GROW Consult by the Danish Mission Council Development Department (DMCDD) and the report builds on the findings from a desk study carried out between March and May 2013.

The review report introduces the background to the review followed by an overview of the applied methodology and a detailed presentation of the findings in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

3. Background & Purpose
In 2009 DMCDD adopted its present Gender Policy in which DMCDD itself, its members and their partners agree to work for the promotion for gender equality and the attainment of equal rights for men and women. The policy comprises four principles that should ensure gender sensitivity and promote gender equality in development interventions financed by DMCDD (page 10). These are:

- **Dialogue**: DMCDD, members and partners work to foster open and respectful dialogue and mutual understanding between the two genders in all development interventions and at all levels.
- **Participation**: DMCDD, members and partners do their utmost to promote genuine equal gender participation, including more space of manoeuvre for the weaker part, most often women, as well as heightened influence on decision-making on joint issues at all levels.
- **Mutuality and responsibility**: DMCDD, members and partners perceive men and women alike as responsible change agents and work for the promotion of mutual respect between men and women. Men are duty bearers for women’s rights as women are duty bearers for men’s rights. Change processes that positively influence the life and work conditions of one gender should receive active support and responsible action from the other gender. Men’s and women’s time and resources should be considered equally valuable for joint development.
- **Role models**: DMCDD, members and partners take upon themselves to sincerely act as visible role models for each other and to the communities they work in all interactions. As duty bearers for men’s and women’s rights DMCDD, members and partners are advocates for the rights of women and men and for the equal access to resources and influence.

The policy is primarily directed towards the development work carried out by partners and supported by DMCDD (p.5).

As an umbrella organization, DMCDD provides services to its member organizations and their partners, for example by granting funds for development projects. In some cases the member organizations themselves are actively involved in project planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME), in other cases DMCDD provides technical assistance and administers the projects together with partners on behalf of member organizations.

The Gender Policy represents the official commitment by DMCDD, members and partners to integrate gender equality into their activities at all levels of society and within own organizations (p. 3). The policy is thus considered a guideline for the work of DMCDD, members and partners, but as every other policy in every other organization, it risks to languish and be forgotten if not adequately operationalized and institutionalized.
The purpose of this review is therefore to explore achievements and effectiveness of the Gender Policy and to examine its relevance and integration of (human) rights based approaches. More specifically, the aim is partly to examine and document the general use of the Gender Policy in day to day work among DMCDD’s staff, external consultants (panel consultants), DMOs and POs and thus assesses the policy’s effectiveness in relation to gender sensitive programming in the south, and partly to assess the policy in relation to latest developments in approaches to gender equality and integration into rights based methodologies.

4. Methodology
According to the ToR prepared by DMCDD (Annex 1) this review is designed to assess the achievements, effectiveness and relevance of the DMCDD Gender Policy. Review tools have been developed by the consultant and shared with DMCDD prior to the data collection. The review has been conducted as a desk review using a mix of the following quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies:

Document review
A desk assessment has been conducted of relevant DMCDD documents including the DMCDD Gender Policy and 10 selected development projects (Annex 2); 7 financed through the DMCDD Mini Program (below 1 mio. DKK) and 3 financed directly by Danida (above 3 mio. DKK).

The projects are designed and implemented by 10 diverse southern partner organizations (PO) in cooperation with 10 Danish DMCDD member organizations (DMO). 2 of the projects were designed prior to the approval of the DMCDD gender policy in 2009, while 8 were designed after the approval of the policy. The geographic distribution of projects are; Africa South of Sahara (4), North Africa (1), Middle East (1), South Asia (3), South East Asia (1). The document review assess whether gender sensitive programming have been applied to the project designs.

Questionnaires
Tailor-made questionnaires with open and close ended questions (see annex 3 and 4) have been developed and distributed to 10 DMOs and 17 POs in order to obtain comprehensive and systematic knowledge of the practical application and integration of the Gender Policy. Replies were received from 8 out of 10 DMOs (equal to a response rate of 80%) and 15 out of 17 POs (equal to a response rate of 88%). The response rates are considered sufficient for a qualified assessment of achievement and effectiveness of the DMCDD gender policy in terms of 1) the practical application and integration of the policy approach to gender, and 2) the perceived applicability by South Partners and DMCDD member organisations.

Interviews
Questionnaires have been supplemented by qualitative semi-structured (telephone) interviews and semi-structured focus group interviews with: DMCDD staff, 5 selected DMOs, and 3 external consultants (panel consultants) and the former DMCDD employee in charge of the policy development (see annex 5).
A number of quotes are highlighted to emphasize the voice of the different stakeholders who have been introduced to and worked with the Gender Policy. The reliability and validity of data and statements have been tested through triangulation, i.e. by comparing the data and statements provided by DMCDD, DMOs and POs.

Limitations
The review has been designed as a desk study of the DMCDD Gender Policy, selected project documents and collected data. Questionnaires and semi-structured (telephone) interviews have been filled by/conducted with selected individual representatives (but not broadly discussed within organizations) and only covered a portion of the many stakeholders (DMOs, POs, etc.). Findings have not been verified through field visits. Furthermore, the review does not give particular attention to the fact that DMCDD administers projects on behalf of DMOs, which gives rise to great diversity in the degree of DMOs’ active involvement in the projects. Reservations must be taken for possible errors and shortcomings caused by the nature of the approach.

5. Findings
The section on findings contains an analysis in two parts of the Achievements and Effectiveness of the Policy (5.1) and the Relevance and integration of (human) rights based approaches (5.2). Each analysis is followed by recommendations.

5.1 Achievements and effectiveness of the DMCDD Gender Policy
An assessment of the practical application and integration of the policy approach to gender equality in DMCDD financed projects and activities and of the perceived applicability by South Partners and DMCDD member organisations.

According to the Gender Policy’s own wording the aim is “to inspire and support partners in their work for the promotion of gender equality and equal rights in all the particular contexts and projects in which they are involved” (p.5); an objective that can be attained by a direct and intentional policy application or by an indirect and more unintentionally integration into the day-to-day work of the organizations.

In the following we will initially take a look at the awareness and dissemination of the DMCDD Gender Policy and how the policy approach to gender equality in general has been applied by DMCDD, DMOs, POs and external consultants. This is followed by a more detailed analysis of the extent to which gender sensitive programming has been applied on a practical level. The premise of the detailed analysis is the 4 principles which provide the guidelines and tools for the practical implementation of DMCDD’s gender approach, namely; 1) Dialogue, 2) Participation, 3) Mutuality and Responsibility, and 4) Role Models (p 10 – 18).
5.1.1. Awareness, dissemination and application of the DMCDD policy

If we start by looking at the awareness of the DMCDD Gender Policy the responses provided by DMO and POs show that 5 of the 8 DMOs (62%) are familiar with the policy. Of these 5 DMOs all (100%) recall to have shared the policy with their partner. However, there appears to be a significant discrepancy between the number of DMOs who have shared the DMCDD gender policy with partners and POs who recall to have been introduced to the policy (only 13%)¹.

This result indicates that neither DMCDD nor DMOs have had a deliberate dissemination strategy. DMCDD staff confirms the assumption when they say that although it was the intention that the DMOs should share policy with their partners: “we do not believe it has happened in very many cases”. The picture is more or less the same when it comes to the external panellists where 2 out of 3 recall to have received the gender policy, but without any guidance on how it should be applied in the assesment of projects.

The process of developing the Gender Policy did, according to DMCCD staff, increase their awareness and knowledge of gender and development, but they are still seeking ways to operationalize the policy. It is their experiences that the issue of gender is best dealt with when it is linked to concrete cases where it is relevant for DMOs and POs to consider for example the participation and/or role of men and women respectively. In order to facilitate tangible gender reflections the Mini-Program application formats have been revised so that they contain a number of strategic questions regarding gender. Furthermore, DMCDD has applied the policy by revising the Guidelines for the Mini-Program and the assessment formats used by the external panellists to assess the project application prior the Board’s decision on applications.

The DMCDD lead on the policy development recalls that: “The policy was not explicitly developed with an eye for an adaption and application by partners. I do however believe that the emphasis on gender as an issue of women as well as men have had some impact at partner level; particularly because the policy has been

¹ Reservations must be made to the fact that the DMCDD policy may have been shared with an other person in the organization than the one filling the questionnaire, which the Children’s Ministries Network in the Philiphine rightfully notes in their response.
reflected in the Mini-Program guidelines, the application formats and the assessment format used by the panelists who review the applications”.

The Baptist Church in Denmark confirms that the application formats are impacting the dialogue on gender: “The DMCDD policy may not be bedtime reading every night. However, gender is discussed with partners when we plan our projects, because the issue of gender has been reflected in the application formats as a consequence of the policy”.

If we look at the response provided by DMOs as well as POs in regard to the priority given to gender issues during project PME, the significant level of priority substantiate the assumption that the project application format is impacting the focus on gender.

The DMCDD Gender Policy has thus been directly employed by DMCDD itself in its guidelines and project application formats but apart from that it is difficult to establish much proof that the policy is widely disseminated and directly and intentionally applied in the day-to-day work within the majority of DMOs and POs. However, there is reason to assume that the policy to some extent is being applied indirectly and as a consequence of the revised guidelines and project application formats. But there is a need for, as one of the external panellists notes, “a strategic plan for how to better translate the policy into practice, not only by the means of application formats”. This is a process which requires further efforts in capacity building of DMOs who currently possess limited gender capacity², to actively articulate gender issues in their dialogue with partners and to actively work with gender tools in their PME of projects.

5.1.2 Gender Mainstreaming
The DMCD gender policy does not explicitly apply the concept of gender mainstreaming; defined by the UN Economic and Social Council as “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned

2 According to the responses to the questionnaire, only 2 DMOs (25%) have had staff members attending gender training and only one organization has a member of staff assigned to work with gender issues.
action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality”.

However, without using the concept of gender mainstreaming the policy translates into an aim of inspiring and supporting partners “in their work for the promotion of gender equality and equal rights in all the particular contexts and projects in which they are involved” (p. 5), and genuinely improving the lives of poor men and women through a gender dialogue that cuts across “all practices and interventions as a way of enabling the voice of poor men and women to come through more clearly to form their work and lives” (p 11). The revision of the Mini-Program guidelines and the project application formats has consequently resulted in formats designed to capture men’s and women’s wishes, needs and experiences at different levels in the project design (from planning to implementation strategy), and thus nurturing a more-or-less mainstreamed approach to gender; by requesting applicants to consider the following:

- **Context analysis:** Describe the local project context and/or national context of relevance to the project (geographical, political, cultural, social, economic and gender wise)
- **Project Planning:** Has a baseline study or survey been carried out during the project preparation (including gender specific analysis)?
- **Problem and Stakeholder Analysis:** Describe how the issue of women’s and men’s (girls’ and boys’) specific roles, needs and interests have been dealt with in the problem analysis,
- **Target Group Analysis:** Describe the project’s target group specified according to size, gender and if relevant according to their ethnic, social, age or other kinds of identity,
- **Project objectives:** Include the project’s intended achievements for men’s and women’s lives respectively,
- **Intervention Strategy:** Describe the role of the target group (men, women, girls, and boys) in the implementation of the project.

Assuming that the projects selected for the gender policy review constitute a relatively representative sample of DMCDDs project portfolio, the document review shows that all projects per design include reflections on gender issues. These reflections represent, however, very diverse reflection levels. Measured against the gender score matrix, developed as a tool to assess the practical application and integration of the policies approach to gender equality in DMCDD financed projects and activities (for the parameters see Box 1), it is evident that there is a relatively large variation in the extent and the level to which the individual projects are able to apply the policy approach to gender. 4 out of the 10 projects are thus assessed to have gender incorporated in a manner that sets the stage for a (potential) mainstreamed gender approach, 4 had a more sporadic (less elaborate and systematic) gender approach, while the remaining 2 had very limited reflections on gender (see the gender score matrix, Annex 6).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1: Parameters of the Gender Score Matrix</th>
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<tr>
<td>Presence of a contextual gender analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presence of gender indicators and sex segregated data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring of gender indicators and sex segregates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equal representation of ♂ / ♀</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provision of equal opportunities for ♂ / ♀ ’s participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men are actively involved in gender activities/issues</td>
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**Provision of services to ensure particular needs of**

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<tr>
<td>Advocacy for equal rights, access to resources and equal influence</td>
<td>Budget for gender related activities</td>
<td>Reference to own gender policy</td>
<td>Reference to DMCDD gender policy</td>
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According to the experiences of DMCDD staff there has been a significant increase in the focus on gender since the first gender review in 2008. They are however, not able to determine whether the increased focus is a consequence of a general gender-awareness within the development sector or an effect of the Gender Policy (i.e. improved professional advisory on gender by the secretariat and new design of the application formats). The fact that gender reflections are present in all the reviewed DMCDD financed projects indicates that the Gender Policy has had a certain effect, but a number of challenges remain.

**5.1.3 The challenges of strategic coherence**

The gender policy emphasizes dialogue as a key principle and states (p. 12) that gender dialogue should be undertaken as part of the planning and monitoring process at target group level, leadership level in the PO, partnership level and at the level of the DMO.

The documents review indicates that a gender dialogue is a common part of the planning process (and to some extent the monitoring process). The finding is confirmed by the DMOs and POs own assessment of their gender dialogue, although there is a tendency that the DMOs rate the level of dialogue on the issue of gender significantly higher than the POs.

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Have you engaged in gender dialogue with your South partner?

- Yes, elaborate dialogue: 45%
- Yes, sporadic dialogue: 44%
- No: 11%

Have you engaged in gender dialogue with your Danish partner?

- Yes, elaborate dialogue: 34%
- Yes, sporadic dialogue: 33%
- No: 33%

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All project documents do as stated above contain a certain level of gender reflections, but the majority of projects lack a strategic and coherent gender focus. A focus where there is coherence between 1) analysis which actively address gender issues (context, stakeholders, target group and problem), 2) objectives of the intended achievements for men’s and women’s lives respectively, 3) gender indicators, 4) intervention strategy designed to provide equal opportunities for males and females, and 5) M&E assessing the differential impact of the development project on groups of males and females.

A representative of the external panellists, who assess the DMCDD project applications, confirms the tendency, stating that “the applicants are guided to reflect on gender issues in their applications. However, the gender analysis is very often superficial and lacking coherence with the project strategy”.

There are very few examples of projects where the intention of gender equality is translated into concrete gender sensitive strategies which cater not only for equal representation, but also full and equal participation and takes into account the particular situations (and barriers) prevailing for men and women respectively (See box 2). According to Assist the lack of coherence between analysis and strategy can be an outcome of the fact that “the analysis is made by professionals, who do not consider it important to explain in details how the intervention is designed to accommodate the needs of boys and girls. It is common sense to them”. This is certainly a possible explanation, but it does not necessarily apply for all projects. It may thus be a help for the applicants, as another external panellist suggests, “if the guiding questions in the application format were more specific. Under strategy you could for example ask: How will you ensure that women are able to participate equally with men?”.

**Box 2: Cases of coherence between analysis and strategy**

The Sri Lankan project “Early Childhood Protection – staying safe from CSA” provides an example of a project in which problem and stakeholder analysis contains relevant sex disaggregated data: “The percentages of boys and girls affected by child sexual abuse in Sri Lanka are roughly equal. According to the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA), it has been estimated that 15% of boys and 12% of girls in Sri Lanka are subject to sexual abuse, but each deals with the trauma of the experience differently and therefore the effects of the problem are not the same for both genders”. However, the project document provides no further reflection on gender and does consequently not outline any strategy for how the project intends to take account of the gender difference and deal with the effects of sexual abuse according to the child’s gender.

Another project, “Where is the Good Samaritan Today?” in Zambia recognizes the importance of having men represented at HIV/AIDS awareness workshops; “In order to achieve a good result there should be balance between men, women and youth”, but mentions at the same time that it will be a challenge to attract enough men to have a 50% percent representation. However, the section on intervention strategy does not reveal any reflections on “how” (what type of specific interventions) the project intends to strengthen/motivate the representation/participation of men.

Only one project, namely the outright gender project; “Gender Equality Promotion Project” implemented by Union des Eglises Baptistes Burundi in cooperation with the Baptist Union Denmark, can be considered to have a gender sensitive strategy which is coherent with a gender sensitive analysis, objectives, and gender sensitive indicators. The project aims to elevate women’s positions in associations, churches & families. The project targets 2500 illiterate women and 500 illiterate men who will participate in an alphabetisation program and be sensitised towards more gender equality. Men are strategically included in the program in the recognition that men need to be included for a more all-round effect of the
development efforts. Furthermore, babysitters are available to take care of small children brought to class by the women in order to provide women an equal opportunity for participation.

There is a tendency that gender equality becomes a “program declaration” more than an operationalized gender sensitive strategy - taking into account gender issues derived from the context- and problem analysis. The consequence is a rather random and incoherent gender approach, where gender broadly speaking becomes a matter of a brief passage in the context and/or target group analysis and a few quantitative indicators on men’s and women’s equal representation.

5.1.4 The challenges of strategic gender analysis
Participation is another key principle in the gender policy, which states (p.14) that participation is more than a 50/50 share of men and women. It argues that it is important with an adequate and deeper understanding of why a certain percentage of women and men are important.

There appears to be a growing recognition among DMOs and POs of the need for analyzing and considering Gender, i.e. men’s and women’s particular situation, in development projects. Based on their experiences a number of organizations have concluded that: “It does not work simply to focus on women” (Danmission). “Even though boys have higher priority in education, there are still many illiterate men, who also want to learn how to read and write”(Baptist Union Denmark); and “Women who have been targeted by our projects experience that their men don’t understand them anymore, and they request us to make projects for their men as well” (Danish Israel Mission). According to the Baptist Union of Denmark, the approach has developed out of a “dialogue with our partner (based on practical experiences) and the advice we have received from DMCDD staff”. A further analysis of the Gender as opposed to Women approach is found in section 5.2.1.

It is, however, common practice to write project documents in a “gender neutral” manner, wherein neither men nor women are explicitly mentioned. Neutral descriptions such as, “poor farmers”, “people with disability”, “children”, “people living with HIV/AIDS” etc. are repeatedly hiding the fact that a given cultural and/or socio-economic situation often is experienced differently by women and men.

The aim of a context and problem analysis is to understand the socio-economic and cultural situation of a particular group of people and subsequently to understand how this situation affects particular gender and age groups differently, i.e. if for example there are specific barriers to one gender’s participation in the project. It is generally acknowledged that the more contextual knowledge, the better and more appropriate the strategy to create equal opportunities for men and women. This is also reflected in the policy, which states that “It has to be analyzed how we ensure optimal participation of both genders.... If the project strategy is developed from the bottom-up, justifying and qualifying gender based participation at target group level before “setting the %”, a much more relevant, sound and probably ambitious strategy grows organically out of the context and unfolds the future direction” (p. 14).
The document review reveals that the majority of projects contain only very vague or moderate analysis of gender related issues, including contextual sex disaggregated baseline data. Furthermore, there is a tendency to base gender analysis on *assumptions* regarding the situation for men and women respectively, or to apply national statistical data on a local context regardless of the fact that the local situation may differ from the average national situation, due to for example specific socio-economic or cultural conditions (see box 3 for an example). The general insufficient gender analysis can be explained by a rapid planning approach and/or the fact that statistical data on gender issues is limited or inadequate in many developing countries.

**Box 3: Case of the use of national gender segregated data**

The project “Combating Poverty through Thematic Capacity Building of CSO Clusters (II)” in Egypt is a good example of a project, which considers the local context in terms of the differences among governorates in the ratio of literacy, acknowledging that illiteracy is concentrated among the poor governorates. The project furthermore considers the illiteracy rate among females and males respectively. According to the 2004 Egypt MDG report the illiteracy rate for young females aged 12-15 years is almost twice that of males (15.5 and 8 percent, respectively), while the total female illiteracy is accounting for 31.6 percent, compared to the illiteracy rate for males, which is 17.4 percent.

The project consequently focuses one of its immediate objectives on female education: *34,200 girls and young women in Minia empowered through formal, informal and civic education so they are able to contribute to community development and choose a better life for themselves.*

However, the project monitoring report from 2011 explains that the approach on women simply is too one-dimensional and inadequate in the given local context: *The target group has been changed to include both women and men, since men also have a strong urge to be educated in order to get a job (even a job as a driver requires you to be able to read and write). In Minia, the number of boys, who have left school without a compulsory education, is very high.*

The case illustrates that even though the project document contains an elaborate context and problem analysis, it is not always possible and sufficient to apply national gender figures to a local context, where socio-economic and/or cultural factors may contribute to a situation, which is different from the national average situation.

Replies to the questionnaires confirm that only 25-30% of the organizations consider themselves having an established procedure of conducting gender analysis as part of project planning, while more than half of the organizations says that they occasionally make a gender analysis as part of project planning.
It is consequently reasonable to suggest that there is a significant need for more elaborate and strategic context specific gender analysis that thoroughly assess the situation of men and women respectively in relation to a given problem.

5.1.5 The challenge of monitoring and evaluating gender issues

Monitoring and evaluation is vital in measuring and documenting the participation of men and women respectively. The policy states (p. 13): “DMCDD, members and partners will commit each other to take the next step and go one level deeper: seeking how to transform formal representation into effective participation. And account for it!”

Responses provided by DMOs and POs indicate that their projects have a relatively high level of gender indicators. As much as 77% of POs are of the opinion that their projects always or frequently contain gender indicators.

The assessment of project documents confirms that the majority of projects contain gender specific indicators (see box 4 for some good examples). However, the above challenge of strategic gender analysis affects the
ability to develop smart indicators. When indicators are developed without a comprehensive gender (context and problem) analysis and sex disaggregated data, they tend to become merely a matter of equal representation of men and women rather than a matter of equal participation in order to ensure equal rights and access to resources and services.

Without smart indicator, it is not possible to make appropriate monitoring and evaluation of a project’s outcome in terms of gender equality; for instance, the level of improvement of women’s access to resources and social services, or the outcome of possible policy initiatives on men and women respectively.

Thus, it is interesting to note the significant difference between: the number of DMOs and POs who always or frequently develop gender indicators (DMO:62 % and PO:77% ) and the number of organizations who always or frequently have a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that is able to assess the effect on men and women respectively (DMO:43 % and PO: 54%).

The questionnaires do not provide any examples of the content and the quality of the indicators used for monitoring and evaluation, but the document review reveals some good examples of smart gender indicators (see box 4). However, the vast majority of gender indicators remain focused on equal representation of men and women, and gender equality is consequently monitored and evaluated mainly according to numbers.

A representative of the external panellists confirms the picture saying that “It is not my immediate impression that the applicants reflect very well on the issue of gender and when it happens, it is mostly quantitative reflections, such as the 50%-women-approach”.

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**Box 4: Examples of gender specific indicators**

*Towards positive health, dignity and prevention (Anglican Diocese of Bo, Sierra Leone /Mission Africa*  

Objective 2: The prevention of HIV/AIDS has increased through heightened awareness, increased voluntary confidential
counselling and testing (VCCT) coverage, increased condom use and, reduction of high risk behaviour and unsafe practices. (Selected) indicators are:

- The use of condoms has increased with 20% for the high risk groups: community sex workers, men having sex with men, people with multiple partners, people living with HIV and youth
- The number of VCCT clients has four doubled by the end of the project period and men make out 40% of the test cases

**Hope for Children and Youth (The Palestinian Bible Society/The Danish Israel Mission)**

**Objective 1:** JHOP is a recognized children and youth centre in Jericho with the capacity to offer socio-psycho support to especially teenage girls and to promote school attendance and healthy lifestyles through a variety of activities. (Selected) indicators are:

- 75% of JHOP girls continue their education by project end due to the encouragement and support received through the JHOP program.
- 75% of the JHOP girls have increased their self-esteem and well-being by project end as a result of the input from JHOP (verified through testimonies from the youth / journal from psychiatrists).

### 5.1.6 The challenges of balancing services with advocacy for gender equality

The gender policy emphasizes “Mutuality and Responsibility” and “Role Models” as 2 out of 4 key principles in the practical implementation of the policy (p. 15 – 18). Both principles aim at enforcing the notion that men and women share the responsibility of development; that men are duty-bearers for women’s rights while women are duty-bearers for men’s rights, and that DMCDD, members and partners are role models in society and duty-bearers for men as well as women’s rights. Being role models and duty-bearers implies being “advocates for the rights of women and men and for equal access to resources and influence”. It is thus an ambition to make DMCDD, members and partners change strategy from mainly focusing on survival strategies for women within existing structures to focusing on changing unjust societal structures that oppress women and hinder equal rights, equal access to resources and equal influence (p. 7).

Approximately 75% of DMOs and POs express that service delivery is *always or frequently* balanced with advocacy for men and women’s equal rights, equal access to resources and equal influence. The staff at DMCDD is increasingly seeing a shift towards less service delivery and more community advocacy (targeting local decision-makers) and the document review confirms the trend, but the majority of advocacy initiatives remains largely unfocused in terms of gender.

In spite of a greater focus on advocacy many of the DMCDD financed projects, de facto address practical gender needs within the areas of health, education, agriculture etc. A more effective gender approach would demand that projects also address the more strategic gender needs through advocacy, for example by focusing on advocacy towards duty bearers and decision-makers in regard to men’s and women’s unequal access to decision-making processes and unequal access to services and resources (i.e. unequal access to education, health, land etc. or discriminatory legislation) which underpin inequity and disempowerment.
Conclusion to section 5.1

The aim of the section above has been to assess the extent to which the Gender Policy has influenced DMOs and POs approach to gender sensitive programming on a general and practical level, and the extent to which the policy has been applicable in day to day work among DMCDD’s staff, external consultants (panel consultants), etc.

The review finds that the direct and intentional application of the DMCDD Gender Policy in the DMCDD financed projects is rather limited, but there is sufficient reason to assume that the existence of a policy, its integration into the Mini-program guidelines and application formats as well as the greater attentiveness to gender at the DMCDD secretariat, indirectly has contributed to increased gender reflections and awareness among DMOs and POs. The issue of gender is thus found to be reflected in the majority of project documents, but there is a lack of coherence between gender analysis, objectives (and indicators of gender equality) and the intervention strategy; sufficient gender analysis; appropriate gender monitoring and evaluation; and strategic advocacy for men’s and women’s equal rights and access to services, resources and decision-making.

Most projects consequently remain with a deficiency in terms of gender sensitive programming/mainstreaming.

A more effective application of the Gender Policy will require a strategic plan for how to translate the policy into practice by operationalizing its principles in terms of gender sensitive formats, gender sensitive project assessment tools, gender sensitive technical advice to DMOs/POs and capacity building of DMCDD staff and DMOs.

Furthermore, on a more principle note, it will be essential to determine the status of the Gender Policy. Does the official commitment made by DMCDD, members and partners to integrate gender equality into their activities at all levels of society and within own organizations (p. 3) require to be actively enforced, i.e. in the assessment of projects? Or is the policy merely a non-binding document which should guide and inspire the users to promote gender equality and equal rights (as stated on p.5 in the policy)?
One specific policy area should however be highlighted for having some noticeable effect, namely the area of equal gender participation. It may not yet be entirely translated into gender sensitive programming, but the review finds that the different stakeholders (DMCDD staff, external panelists and DMO) recognize the need to ensure participation of both genders (either in mixed groups or in specific groups of men or women). This recognition is considered partly to be a result of on-the-ground practical project experiences (bottom-up) and partly the advice provided by the DMCDD staff (top-down).

If a best practice should be derived from the findings in the above section, it will be the “Gender Equality Promotion Project” implemented by Union des Eglises Baptists Burundi and the Baptist Union Denmark (presented in Box 2), in which babysitting is included as a strategic means to overcome an identified barrier for women’s active participation and thus provide women and men equal opportunities for participation.

There are several reasons to why the policy is not being fully applied, which will be addressed in section 5.2 on relevance of the DMCDD Gender Policy.

**Recommendations:**

DMCDD is recommended to determine the status of its policies and make a strategic plan for the operationalization of the Gender Policy. Such a plan is recommended to cover at least the following activities:

- A strategic revision of the application/report formats and guidelines in order to ensure that project logframes contain gender sensitive outcomes, outputs and indicators and will reflect changes in gender, and to create coherence between the different levels of gender analysis, gender sensitive intervention strategies and gender monitoring and evaluation.
- Development of simple and practical gender assessment tools to be used by DMCDD staff (and external panellists) in counselling and screening of projects; for example inspired by the Gender and Empowerment Impact Assessment [www.cisu.dk/Default.aspx?ID=19172](http://www.cisu.dk/Default.aspx?ID=19172).
- Provision of elaborate technical advice to DMOs/POs (depending on whether the DMO is actively involved in the PME) in the areas of:
  - Gender analysis and the use of sex disaggregated (i.e. by using the OECDs Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) [http://genderindex.org/countries](http://genderindex.org/countries)) in combination with a contextual analysis of vulnerability factors (gender, age, etc.) in order to consider local conditions which apply to the target group of women and men (girls and boys).
  - Development of gender specific indicators in order to improve monitoring and evaluation of gender related issues.
  - Data collection and documentation of cases regarding gender inequality in order to strengthen strategic advocacy.
- Capacity building of DMOs; partly to strengthen their conceptual understanding of gender (and the gender policy) and thereby their ability to reflect and respond to gender issues, and partly to improve
their ability to operationalize the policy through technical skills which enable them to integrate gender sensitive PME into their development projects in an organic non-mechanistic way.

5.2. Relevance of the DMCDD Gender Policy

Assessment of the policy in the light of new approaches to gender sensitive programming and (human) rights based approaches

Assessing the relevance of the gender policy entails two levels: 1) Relevance in the light of new approaches to gender sensitive programming and (human) rights based approaches, and 2) The relevance to the targeted audience, namely DMCDD, DMOs and POs.

If we start by looking at the relevance of the policy in relation to new approaches to gender sensitive programming and (human) rights based approaches, the entry point will be chapter 3 “DMCDD’s gender approach and policy”, in which two cross-cutting approaches are considered to be the main and most interesting approaches, namely the Gender-and-Development approach as opposed to the Women-in-Development approach, and secondly the advocacy approach.

5.2.1 From WID to GAD

The DMCDD gender policy emphasizes the need to move from the common Women-in-Development (WID) approach, which “too often has resulted in the development of mere survival strategies for individual women within existing structures”, to a transformative Gender-and-Development (GAD) approach, which aims to change unjust societal structures “in order to secure equal rights, equal access to resources and equal influence on grassroots in men’s and women’s daily lives; an objective which demands for strategic advocacy at local, national and international level” (p. 7).

There exists at number of different philosophical and practical approaches to gender work, but the GAD policy approach as opposed to a WID approach is in this review considered to be appropriate and visionary, and it is acknowledged that gender equality is not achieved merely by adding a "woman's component" into an existing activity or making all development interventions exclusively for women³. Everyone – girls and boys, women and men – is made vulnerable by harmful gendered structures, attitudes and behaviors, although the most consistently negative effects occur for women and girls. Equality is more likely to be achieved by bringing the experience, knowledge, and interests of women and men into the development agenda and by strategically seeking to transform rigid and unjust social and institutional structures, power relations and gender norms that prevent gender equality.

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³ Other international development actors who acknowledge the GAD approach are among others Care International, ILO, AusAID, and the European Commission.
The approach is acknowledged by DMOs who are gradually moving from WID to GAD in recognition of the need for a contextual understanding of the situation of men and women respectively and thereby to ensure equal gender participation.

“We have been promoting women more than we have promoted men; but we have realized that it is a problem if men are being excluded. There is a need for a balance! We have examples where women are prohibited to participate in our projects or are being violated by their men who feel that their position is threatened”. The organization has consequently included men in their alphabetization project to ensure that illiterate men and women are provided the same opportunities and to ensure that men see and accept the benefit of women’s empowerment (Baptist Union Denmark).

“The policy approach to gender can help our partners to understand that a certain problem is not a woman’s issue but a gender issue. In some of our projects, the women have been empowered to such an extent that they have made their men to be worried. The men do not understand what has happened to the women and in such a situation it is quite natural that they are frightened and react negatively” (Danish Israel Mission).

5.2.2 Advocacy for gender equality and equal rights for men and women

Another key approach to gender equality is internal and external advocacy towards church leaders, local duty-bearers and decision-makers. The policy document emphasizes that “local churches can have a quite powerful impact through advocacy work, due to their popular foundation in local societies. ... We believe that DMCDD, members and partners can do much more for the promotion of gender equality, for example in cases of divorce, custody rights, inheritance rights and violence against women”.

Indeed, DMCDD, DMOs and POs have an important role to play in advocacy for the promotion of gender equality, by encouraging critical awareness among men and women of gender roles and norms; promoting the position of women; challenging the distribution of resources and the allocation of duties between men and women; and pushing for gender-equitable laws and policies. Projects addressing “illiteracy” do for example provide significant potential for addressing men and women’s equal rights to education, while projects addressing “food production” provide significant potential for addressing men and women’s equal rights to ownership of land, etc.

By lifting the gender agenda to be part of a political process, the DMCDD gender policy approach remains in accordance with current practices. However, many projects do not make use of the potential of advocacy and remain focused on meeting the practical needs of people (service delivery), rather than promoting the strategic gender needs through advocacy for equal access to services, resources and decision-making, and when we see examples of advocacy it remains community based. The DMCDD staff confirms that advocacy for men and women’s equal rights “are grass-root initiatives and that there are not many examples of initiatives directed at national policy level”.
Since States are responsible for regulating national policies and laws, they ought to be a key target for advocacy initiatives aiming to promote equal access to services, resources and decision-making, but the Gender Policy provides only limited guidelines in that regard. There is consequently a need for a strategic approach to advocacy inspired by the DMCDD Advocacy Policy. “In development and advocacy work the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Conventions of Human Rights are tools to express basic conditions that all men and women are entitled to. Thereby churches and Christian organisations have a language in common with other NGOs, states and multilateral institutions which is highly useful in negotiations regarding regulating and distributing resources and promoting equal access to decision-making processes” (p. 7).

Even though the Gender Policy repeatedly refers to the concept of “rights” it does not refer to a human rights-based approach, probably because it builds on the Christian core values such as the belief that men and women alike are created in God’s image and the notion that men and women are equal in Christ; values which are shared and identifiable amongst the DMCDD members and partners. But the Christian core values do not exclude a rights-based approach, which is also emphasized in the Advocacy Strategy where it is stated that “DMCDD encourages members and partners to take on a human rights perspective in light of the Biblical notion of sanctity of life and dignity of people” (p. 7).

The principle of equal rights for women and men is contained in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all subsequent major international human rights instruments, but most comprehensively elaborated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. This convention codifies women's rights to non-discrimination on the basis of sex, and equality as self-standing norms in international law, and establishes that women and men are entitled, on a basis of equality, to the enjoyment and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

Nevertheless, as long as the DMCDD policy document does not refer directly to the human rights based approach it “refrains” itself from articulating legitimate claims with the moral authority of the Human Rights Charters and strategically to hold the signatory States responsible when they violate or fail to support the realization of human rights.

5.2.3 Relevant - to whom?
Having concluded that the DMCDD policy approach to gender to a very large extent is relevant and in accordance with other international development actor’s approaches to gender sensitive programming, it is time to examine the relevance of it to the targeted audience for the policy; namely DMCDD, DMOs and POs.

If we start by looking at DMCDD itself it becomes clear that there is a limited perception of relevance of the policy document among the DMCDD staff. The Gender Policy is not used actively because “the language is too academic and the content needs to be more tangible”. However, it is widely recognized that the process the previous gender review and the consultations with DMOs and POs, which led to the development of the gender
policy, has played a major role in building gender capacity among staff, i.e. increased understanding of the GAD approach and improved focus on gender in the counseling of DMOs and POs.

The picture is more or less the same when we look at the perception of relevance among the external panellists. Again the policy is considered to be too complex “It has too many words and its aim is unclear. Other DMCDD policies are easier to access”. One panellist however comment on the fact that the policy’s theological gender reflections, its non-mechanical GAD approach and its respect for cultural diversity does enhance its relevance to church organizations. A fact which justify that DMCDD has its own gender policy and makes its own capacity building initiatives aimed at strengthening the dialogue on gender between DMOs and POs and promote gender sensitive programming.

The policys theological justifications for gender equality is echoed among the DMOs and the few POs (2 out of 17) who are familiar with the DMCDD Gender Policy. The Baptis Union of Burundi notes that the DMCDD Gender Policy “is based on the principle that all people are created in God’s image and are beloved by Him. As my organization is religious it is evident that it cannot support any form of discrimination, especially the one aiming to dehumanize and reduce one part of the population to slavery because of the way they are created”.

Among the DMOs 1 out of 5 organizations consider the policy to be very relevant, while 1 finds it irrelevant and the remaining 3 find it somehow relevant. Reflections from Israelsmissionen and Leve Børnene (as well as the POs themselves) indicate that the policy enables the dialogue on gender, but partners tend to build their gender approach on own policies and would give priority to gender regardless of the DMCDD policy.

Do you consider the DMCDD gender policy to be relevant? (DMO)

- Yes, very much 20%
- Yes, to some extent 60%
- No, not really 20%

“We have used the policy as a guideline for what should be taken into account in a DMCDD project, and as a lever to get our partners to integrate gender reflections into the projects. But I believe that our projects would look the same regardless of the policy”.

Danish Israel Mission

“We experience that our partners are aware of and working with gender, and that they have access to materials and courses locally. ... In comparison with other DMCDD policies it is our impression that our partners
The above reflections on the relevance of the gender policy indicate that gender is perceived relevant, but that the policy is too theoretical, too abstract and not sufficiently focused or targeted to have a practical relevance for its rather broad audience.

5.2.4 Willingness to strengthen the dialogue on gender

Having found that the application of the policy is limited and that its relevance is challenged by its generic and wordy format, it is important to emphasise that there exists a considerable willingness to strengthen the dialogue on gender particularly among POs of which 80% would like to have more dialogue with their Danish partner on the issue of gender.

This willingness confirms the policy assumption that “the issue of gender equality is indeed a global issue, and not just another Northern intervention” (p. 9) and should be seen as a window of opportunity and a recognition of the fact that poverty cannot be alleviated and rights and social justice cannot be achieved without addressing gender inequality.
Conclusion to section 5.2
The aim of this section has been to assess the relevance of the Gender Policy in relation to the latest developments in approaches to gender equality and integration into rights based methodologies.

Attention to gender equality is widely agreed as essential to professional development practice and the assessment shows that the GAD approach, as opposed to a WID approach, is a relevant and up-to-date policy approach. Responses from DMOs and POs confirm that the approach is aligned with their experiences of best or promising gender practice.

Furthermore, the advocacy approach remains a vital and an acknowledged means to promote gender equality. A more explicit human rights-based approach would, however, shape the awareness of the role and responsibility of States and provide DMCDD, MOs and POs an appropriate and legitimate tool for equal rights advocacy. A future revision of the DMCDD gender policy should consequently meet the need for an integration of the human rights approach – or an explicit Gender Justice approach which expresses a commitment to work towards equal rights, opportunities and outcomes for men and women in all areas of life.

With the integration of an explicit human rights/gender justice approach the DMCDD policy approach to gender equality would be considered relevant and in full compliance with current gender policy approaches.

However, the inclusive, generic and wordy nature of the Gender Policy influences its users’ notion of relevance. When it comes to the targeted audience, namely DMCDD, DMOs and POs, the assessment of its practical relevance is less encouraging than the assessment of the more theoretical relevance. The DMCDD Gender Policy document suffers evidently from having a too broadly targeted audience, and from being too wordy, too theoretical and too little straight-to-the-point, and the user/reader will, as a consequence of the elaborate gender considerations/reflections and the unclear structure, easily lose direction and fail to apply and implement the otherwise relevant approach to gender equality.

It would thus be unfortunate if the policy format is blocking the way for its good intentions and principles. Just as it would be unfortunate if the explicitly expressed willingness to gender dialogue and the potentially greater and more systematic focus on gender sensitive programming is not actively brought into play in the future.

Recommendation:

DMCDD is recommended to:

- Revise the policy document to be more concise and better structured as to guide the reader to understand 1) the ideological level: why do we need to consider gender equality?, 2) the policy level: what does DMCDD want to achieve and by what means?, and 3) the operational level: how will DMCDD implement the policy*?
• Narrow down the targeted audience of the Gender Policy to be DMCDD (staff, board and external panelists) and the DMOs who apply funds from the Mini-program, to ensure the relevance and effective application of the policy (cf. the Advocacy Policy)
• Develop a position paper on gender that can be shared with POs.
• Integrate a rights-based or gender justice approach, to provide an appropriate and legitimate tool for rights-based advocacy.

*The last section, the “how”, can if found appropriate be published as a separate Gender Policy Implementation paper. The implementation paper should outline the operationalization strategy (i.e. capacity building of staff, board, panelists and DMOs; gender mainstreaming in guidelines and project formats; cross cutting gender reviews, gender-sensitive human resource and staff policy, etc.) and specify the operational measures to ensure gender-equitable participation in, and benefit from, project activities.